A CONCEPT DOCUMENT FOR STARTING AND RUNNING AN SC

World Students Community for Sustainable Development

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This Concept document attempts to outline the critical elements and issues that would be necessary for consideration by any new SC seeking to formalize its operations and to develop an effective management strategy. I have defined the sustainability concept, looked at the short process of forming an SC and finally proposed particular management steps that will help users have a foothold of their organization.

Student Community Start-Up

Concept Strategy Document

1. <u>Sustainable Development (in a Nutshell)</u>

In 1987 the Brundtland Report, also known as Our Common Future, alerted the world to the urgency of making progress toward economic development that could be sustained without depleting natural resources or harming the environment. Published by an international group of politicians, civil servants and experts on the environment and development, the report provided a key statement on sustainable development, defining it as:

"Development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs "

The Brundtland Report was primarily concerned with securing a global equity, redistributing resources towards poorer nations whilst encouraging their economic growth. The report also suggested the equity, growth and environmental maintenance are simultaneously possible and that each country is capable of achieving its full economic potential whilst at the same time enhancing its resource base. The report also recognized that achieving this equity and sustainable growth would require technological and social change.

The report highlighted three fundamental components to sustainable development: environmental protection, economic growth and social equity. The environment should be conserved and our resource base enhanced, by gradually changing the ways in which we develop and use technologies. Developing nations must be allowed to meet their basic needs of employment, food, energy, water and sanitation. If this is to be done in a sustainable manner, the there is a definite need for sustainable level of population. Economic growth should be revived and developing nations should be allowed a growth of equal quality to the developed nations.

Sustainable Development encourages the conservation and preservation of natural resources and of the environment, and the management of energy, waste and transportation. Sustainable Development is development based on Patterson of production and consumption that been be pursued into the future without degrading the human or natural environment. It involves the equitable sharing of the benefits of economic activity across all sections of society, to enhance the well being of humans, protect health and alleviate poverty. If sustainable development is to be successful, the attitudes of individuals as well as governments with regard to our current lifestyles and the impact they have on the environment will need to change.

2. <u>Action for Sustainable Development</u>

Therefore, organizations working on themes around sustainable development (be they youth or contemporary) are organizations with a shared *mission is to bridge social opportunity into sustainable reality innovatively, effectively and efficiently and to promote the whole important aspect of the world developing in a manner to preserve our resources with the future generation*

in mind. They shift the future for the better by innovating social solutions to solve human development problems whether in poverty, hunger, environment, human rights, education, political freedom and other important issues. Their teams are balancing passion, excitement, discipline, private and social benefit through organizing creative destruction of undesirable status quo as well as creating constructive changes in the world.

They focus on the *sustainability of their solutions by generating strategic value to their stakeholders*, which have measurable social/environmental/economic outcomes for their beneficiaries, develop strategic fit as well as social return on global well-being that matches planet Earth's preferences and, in many cases, helping provide logical alternatives to the current global mess.

3. The In-Campus Sustainability Action Planning Process

1. Understanding the sustainable Development Plan	2. Choosing type	3. Develop a sustainability concept	4. Develop an action plan	5. Feedback & adjustment
What is sustainable development?	Sustainable development spectrum at group (SC) level. Choosing thematic areas of concentration e.g. research, activism, public education, private-public partnerships, international collaboration and participation etc. or hybrid approaches that integrates all.	What is social enterprise? Sustainable development action as a story. Key plan's key messages (logical f low)	What is social enterprise? Sustainable development action as a story. Key plan's key messages (logical f low)	What is social enterprise? Sustainable development action as a story. Key plan's key messages (logical flow)

4. <u>SCs in the wider WSCSD.</u>

Within the WSCSD therefore, your role as an SC will be to try and connect the several local energies that are present within your university's student population to an existing global WSCSD community that currently consists several SCs and IMs. I must say, that SCs serve the most critical role within the WSCSD. They are the Core and foundation of the umbrella organization. The many efforts and actions of SC members and IMS that are spread around the

globe are the actual forces that make the WSCSD what it is. Therefore your role as an upcoming SC is to join forces with an already energized global student/professional community to create change first in your local communities and then be part of the global process working towards achieving really sustainable development that can impact positively on future generations.

⚑ Starting an SC;

I liken the process of starting an SC to the process of conceiving and finally giving birth to a baby. You first have the idea, nurture the idea in your mind and feed it with survival mechanisms(structures of governance etc) and then formalize it (naming, registration, unveiling etc). As for the WSCSD, the process of starting an SC is made easier by the fact that an existing ideology already binds all of us together. The idea of working around issues pertaining to Sustainable development and sustainability. The difference from SC to SC therefore is largely on the mode of operation and also on the thematic areas of focus. While other SCs may prioritize environmental issues, others may as well give priority to Social issues that include poverty, food insecurity etc while others may focus on governance and democracy as tools through which sustainability can be achieved.

As for your group, you know which issues are dear to your hearts. These are the thematic issues around which most of your activities will be based.

After the idea is developed and having been past participants of the WSCSD General Annual meetings and summits,   you are familiar with the formal process that exists within the WSCSD to nurture the growth of new SCs and to formally register and accept new SCs. But before this, the general process of getting to own your group before it formally becomes an SC is what is most important. It is no different from the general process that most new organizations go through at the formulation stages.

The process of starting a new group generally thus depends on developing an idea, sharing the idea with likeminded colleagues or mentors, developing an inspired team to sustain the idea and then in drafting the formal structures for governance and registration of the group. Therefore you must have a constitution, an outline of your officials and the structure of leadership, your visions and missions, your modes of operation and the legal status of your group. About the legal status of your group, some student clubs go beyond merely being registered within the university and seek government registration as formal NGOs or NPOs. It will entirely depend on how flexible the rules within your university are. The advantage of registering with the government for example is that you expand your scope and increase your chances of getting bigger partners who would otherwise be scared of the normal bureaucracy we see with university administrations. At the same time it gives you the chance to play in the big league and to develop a larger target population.

⚑ Recruiting;
Once the group has been formalized and registered or nearing registration, the next vital step is to open membership to students who share similar visions to join it. With members, the group becomes stronger and is capable of undertaking major projects quite easily. The membership of

a club is also important in determining to what extent the student population is sensitive to issues that are of interest to humanity as a whole. In our experience at the University of Nairobi, the following approaches have been very helpful and effective;

- Free Video shows on thematic areas such as poverty, environment, global warming, politics, economics etc,
- Organizing Tree planting days
- Open days about the group (distribute leaflets and fliers)
- Posters
- Publications and magazines accessible to students through libraries etc,
- Formal University events(use these events to introduce your group)
- Joint programs with partners ie conferences, joint research, forums etc
- One-to-one marketing (a friend tells a friend who tells a friend)
- Individual Email invitations etc
- Online social networks (facebook, MySpace etc)

But the underlying fact is that Commitment to sustainable Development is about Innovation and Impact, Not mere Action. We have seen that the function of student actors advocating for global sustainability is to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production and so in effect of the entire social world. Students joining the group must prove they will add to this potential.

The University Administration;

University administrations differ on the way they relate with student groups and clubs. It is hard for one to provide a specific strategy for dealing with the university as an institution but atleast we can see the person–to-office relationships and the person-to-person opportunities. Of course the process of registering the group must involve the university if the SC needs formal recognition from the relevant academic offices, so it is somewhat pre-set. Secondly, according to the WSCSD charter, an SC must have a faculty advisor. This is the first imperative role that must be played by any person or authority within the university. This can be a lecturer, college dean, principal etc. This person will play the critical role of providing the needed linkage between the group and its activities and the university fraternity. Therefore it cannot be ignored. And then the group may want to always refer to the university administration for endorsements to participate in particular events or to fundraise. The other important aspect is the case where a university office actually offers financial support to such groups. In such cases, the Faculty advisor, and extendedly the Advisory Board (hope some are professors) should be able to vouche on behalf of the group.

Apart from this, the university can always come in handy in cases such as providing venues for conferences, providing accommodation facilities for conference participants, providing library and computer facilities for group members, recognizing students participants to international events as University ambassadors, providing letters of support to Embassies and Consulates, providing letters of endorsements for proposed activities where fundraising and partnerships are required etc, etc

The Group/ SC Management Concept

What are the concept and its elements?

I have developed this outline just to help you in managing your group around the core items that will be valuable for the success of the group. These items will make it easier and simpler for you and your group to achieve your set goals. It is an overview of your full plan (basically your executive summary for the full organizations, management process). It helps you think through key concepts and stages about managing an SC that needed to be clarified before you expand into a fully functional organization in the future.

The concept's elements
1. The problems (opportunity)
2. Vision and mission
3. Theory of change
4. The solution
5. Social impact
6. The team
7. Financial summary

THE PROBLEMS	**What is the problem?**
	At this stage, although you are addressing issues pertaining to sustainable development, it is critical to develop a problem statement that by providing context, problem situation (initial) and desired situation (goal) that could be specific to your SC
	What causes the problem?
	Develop a logical argument on the causes that create the problem situation (using logical/issue pyramid). Look at global warming for example. What causes it. What is the root cause?
	Why is it important, what is the scale?
	Give clear explanation why the problem matter. What damage would it do, what good will it prevent, what opportunity it brings? How big is the problem and opportunity? Is it local or global?
VISION	**What change in the world would you ultimately want to see?**
	Crafting a vision gives you an image of the future you seek to create. Imagine what the world would be if the problem is solved. Describe it in clarity will not only allow you to see to what direction you must shift the future to, it will also help your SC team develop a clearly shared-vision, making sure everyone is having the same ultimate goal and passion to act effectively.
	What will be the future of your organization?
	A vision drives you, your team and your enterprise toward the same direction. You might want to be the *top Sustainability Research Centre* or develop Clever Strategies to *eradicate poverty sustainably in a fishing village.* Visions help you strengthen your plans.
MISSION	**What impact would you like to accomplish and be accountable for?**
	The mission would give you a sense of purpose or *the reason why your SC exist.* The mission should contain *clear goals and specific objectives for your SC to achieve as practical steps towards your vision.*
	The good objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable,

	Result-focused and Timely). These objectives are the outcome or impact you will be accountable at some clear specific points in time. It should also explain clearly *what will be the value/benefit you will be creating for all your key stakeholders*, e.g. student members, target community, partners, funders, the society as a whole and the global community. The *trick* is to describe what you will be doing over the next 1 to 2 years. Generally, it works best to focus on the SC's and on the needs and benefits to students and partners.
THE SOLUTION	**What is your solution (activities, research, products or services)?** Explain exactly what your solution to the problem is especially in term of research, action, products or services offering to your student community or stakeholders you are involved with in the sustainability initiatives. What are key activities needed in achieving your mission? **Who are your target populations, The World? World Leaders?** Identify the target population for your initiatives and also as outlined by your missions and visions in actions towards sustainable development. Who are they? Where are they? What is the size of your target audience? How do you plan to access them? **How do your solution innovatively remove the pain (solve the problem)?** Describe exactly how the existing global or local problems would be solved by your actions and initiatives. What benefit or value will your solutions or initiatives generate for the whole cause of sustainability? Why and how innovative are your solutions to the global/local sustainability process? What are the limitations and challenges of your proposed actions/solutions? **Who else are Working on sustainability Issues Around You?** Identify those who are trying to solve the same or similar problems as you do at any level- in-campus or outside. What are their approaches? How effective they are? What are their problems, strength and weakness? Is your approach competitive and different to improve affectivity and results? **What can you do better or different from them?** Analyze and compare how your SCs initiatives and approaches is uniquely more effective or efficient compared to existing organizations. What exactly is the difference between your solution and theirs? Are there areas of potential for collaboration and joint projects? **How is ICTs a critical and integral component to your group?** Develop a clear plan to harness the potentials of Information and Communication Technologies to enhance the effectiveness of your solution and how it is integrated to the core visions of sustainable Development. ICTs should also help effectively in member

	recruitment, management, publicity, literature production and development of research materials.
SOCIAL IMPACT	**What is your ultimate desired social change?** Based on your mission and theories of change explain your desired impact be it environmental, social, economic or political. **What are the outcomes derived from your planned activities?** Group your activities into components and explain clearly what social, political or economic outcomes or impacts will be generated through each of these activity components. The outcomes described should have both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Phase your outcome into quarterly (four times a year) manner. **How do these outcomes contribute to your ultimate goal?** Describe exactly how the component outcomes would contribute directly and indirectly to your ultimate goal in achieving positive results in line to your visions and missions regarding sustainable development. Outline your desired social change. Which outcome will contribute the most? Which will have significant contribution in short-term and long-term? **How do you measure your impact?** In what way or what technique will you be using in measuring your phased social outcomes and their contribution to your ultimate goal? What indicator will you be using in measurement? Would it be continuously measured monthly or quarterly? Who will measure the impact
THE TEAM	**What is your human resource/Volunteer requirement? It is very important to understand the necessary human resource needs that would make your group effective**. How many people in the team or positions will be needed to make your group operational? What knowledge/skills are needed in the students leading the group? For siure they must be very passionate and determined to the general course of development. You need people with good skills in organizational management, financial management and accounting, project leaders, analytical management, people skills, writing skills, presentation skills etc? **What is your advisory and mentorship needs?** Identify your needs for advisers and mentors, especially from the fields related to sustainable Development eg global warming, poverty, education, trade, global politics, food insecurity etc. Who among your key stakeholders is needed in order for you to gain insight into each

	stakeholder as well as the support? Who do you have already as your advisers or mentors? **Who are your core team?** Explain your core team and why they are competent to deliver your solution in solving the problem. What is their education background and leadership endearment? What are their unique expertise as outlined above?
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	**What is your financial need?** Describe what will be the major cost elements in order for you to achieve your goal. In most cases, human resources, physical facilities and technology are key cost elements. Explain what proportion of the budget will be generally allocated to each component and why it is allocated that way. **What is your budget?** Provide key budget items based on your cost elements. Break them down into activity-based costing (based your costing on each activities you will be doing) as well as those fixed cost that is pretty much the same all year round such as core staff and rent. Also explain who will be financing your budget, have you talked to them? Did they agree, in the process of proposing or reject. **How would you sustain your SC?** What is your strategy in sustaining the activities and existence of your group? Is there a unique value that will convince your donors, investors and consumers (in case of actions bordering on Social entrepreneurship and earn-income strategy) to continuously support your social enterprise?

5. <u>The Sustainability Action Plan</u>

To successfully run your group and also communicate your activities, it is very important to draw a summarized document that can clearly outline the structures and elements that will influence the success of the group. This will basically be a summary of what I have discussed above but broken down to simplify the issues and make them easy and easy to handle. The structure of the Action plan should include the following;

• Vision, mission, value
• Theory of change
• The solution
• Your target and how you would access them
• Partnership
• Finance
• Evaluation

The Problem / Vision, Mission And Value. Theory Of Change, The Solution, Social Impact

These elements are actually part of the sustainable leadership concept as described above except for the VALUE. Therefore, you could use the same or update the information from the concept's elements. THE VALUE basically delves into the humanity and ethical aspects of particular policies you will set for the group and how they will make more effective the realization of the original visions and missions. It basically seeks to know how you will behave along the way in the life of your SC. I mean, - Your guiding concepts, beliefs, principles and underlying philosophy of the group are outlined here. Your value should be of those principles your SC considered as critically important to its culture, integrity, meaning and day-to-day activities. *For example,* you might be running an initiative that involves untrained youth in the research and development of sustainable networks for ICT in rural or slum environments. You might want to make it a principle to *involve a more diverse group of young people* (from across all ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic groups). On the other hand, you might want to *promote continuous collaboration amongst your team members* to broaden and enhance your SCs' ability to serve the target group. Or even make a priority to *ensure gender balance* in all your operations.

Target Students.
Identify and give details on the target group of your SC. They are those who you will make an impact with. You should exhaustively segment them into differentiated groups as well as classify which group is primary target and which is secondary. Information about their size, value, challenge/opportunity and other notes should also be provided.

Target segments	Size	Value	Challenge/ Validation	Opportunity
Identify key students and stakeholders including local communities who will be benefiting from the activies of your SC. Each segmentation should share similar attributes (demographic, interest, needs, life-style, age, income, etc.) Classify which segment is primary or secondary.	Estimate the size of each segment in term of number of students, villages, population and so on.	Explain key needs of each segment and why it is satisfied by you. What is your value to them?	What are unique challenge and opportunity to each segment. How do you overcome or capitalize on them?	Provide evidences that clearly validate why there is a real need in this segment and/or that they are interested in your or similar initiatives geared towards advocacy work for sustainable development.

Do Similar Clubs Exist?

As I have said above, you may actually have other clubs within your university doing close to what you are doing but operating probably under a different premise, say Democracy or

Environment or Poverty or Fair Trade or Peace etc. Although in working for sustainable development you are not in cut-throat competition, but by understanding who are working across similar thematic topics, it helps you to plan your positioning compare to others in capturing unique value to better addressing the local and global needs for global sustainable development.

Existing Club??	Type	Differentiation and competitive strategy and their services
Identify key clubs or student groups providing similar, substitutable or complimenting activities and initiatives close to the overall theme of sustainable development	Classify type of clubs/student groups as; direct, substitution, new entrant or complimentary.	Explain why your activities are different from them (through feature, unique value, etc..) What can you learn from them? How will you compete or cooperate in order to maximize your SC and sustainability of your actions within and outside of the university?

Social Marketing

Club membership is very important and at the core to sustain the existence of your SC.
Different types of marketing campaigns within and outside your school have to be designed to recruit more and more members while at the same time also attracting the attention of donors or project financiers. Some of the reasons why you may need to promote your organization **are to:**

- be visible
- launch or re-launch
- have a clear identity in their community or sector
- increase communication with stakeholders
- increase membership
- have more volunteers
- have more beneficiaries
- do more work
- locate themselves politically
- get more funding

Both groups have to be told clearly of what they can expect from your group. In our experience at the University of Nairobi, the following approaches have been very helpful and effective;

- Videos,
- Tree planting
- Open days
- Posters
- Publications,
- University events
- Joint programs with partners
- One-to-one marketing
- Individual Email invitations etc

TARGETS Relationship building	Wants & needs	Access strategy	Relationship building
Identify key users segments, donors, investors that are crucial in achieving your mission and sustainability. Information about their locations and accessibility should be provided.	Explain wants & needs of each group, especially those that are perceived as immediate and important in order to know what will attract their attentions.	Explain how you will access each of these groups. What communication channel will you be using (traditional media, internet, event, social network, etc.) How to attract them?	Once you've access to them. How will you involve student members actively all-year round? How will you build trusting relationship? What technique will you be using to maintain your base of financiers? (Visiting, meeting, emailing, calling,etc.) In business enterprise, this is called Customer Relationship Management (CRM), in sustainable Development and general non-profit leadership,……..well…I don't know how it's called…. Hahaha..

🞣 Partnership

As no one can be the best at everything, partners are needed in order to maximize your local/global impact. These are people and organizations that care about your mission. Most of them are non-profit organizations, foundations and leaders in business or development fields. You share the similar goal to them. They might be in the field longer than you, they might have competency that you can't match. What is important is to identify and learn how to work together in order to achieve synergy, i.e. the whole impact of partnership is greater than the sum of its parts. Partnership only make sense when together you can achieve something that each of you can't do alone.

Partner Value	contribution	Strategic fit	Status
Identify partners that will be needed in order to achieving the mission, especially in term of competency and financial need.	Explain what value that each partner bring to the partnership. What is the unique contribution you derive from each partner? Are they highly competent, experienced, connected? Why does your group need them.	Why will they need or want to work with you? Do your mission/activities f it with theirs? What is the value the your SC has for each of them? What is the synergy between you and them?	Describe the status of partnership. Did you contact them? Did they agree to work as partner? Do you have their management support?

🞣 Team plan

Creating a team plan is also part of a successful SCs element. At the group level, you need to work out some details. You Sc will consist of individuals, they are the team that make or break everything. Team plan is among the most important element in planning as talent is everything. The team plan consists of two parts, the core team and the advisors/board.

The Core Team

Talent needs	Position requirement	Recruitment
Identify key talents needed to achieve your mission. Generally you would need management talent, technical talent depending on which area you are working on, administrative talent and so on. You should assert key talent characteristic as well, e.g. managerial talent with special focus on innovation and partnership building.	Base on your identified talent needs, what positions and how many are needed to match those talents needed? What background and experience do you need for each position? What kind of attitudes do you need for each of your positions, energetic yet patient, passionate?	How do you plan to recruit each of the position required? Where the potential recruits within the SC at the moment? How do you access to them? What will attract them? And how do you break into the existing membership to ensure you convince students with potential to contest for he available positions

The Advisory Board

Name	Role	Talent	Background/experience
Names	Identify role as well as responsibility of each advisor/board members.	What are their talents? Explain shortly their unique contribution to Sustainable development as advisor/board member.	Provides a summary of their background and experiences. Key important things to include are education, certification, citizenship, interest, work experiences (part-time, full-time), past unique contribution to global development, sustainable development, conferences, personal membership or networks. And any other thing to prove that the person is uniquely f it the role, the mission and the team as a whole d

🔶 Financial Plan

The planning and management of your money or financials are among the most critical tasks in determining whether your SC will be cost-effective, sustainable and thriving. You should seriously consider the elements of the budget and the fund-raising plan;

The budget

Expense category	Expense	items Cost	Total
Identify key expense category by grouping all expense items into various groups. Generally it consists of human resources, physical facilities, technologies, activities and so on.	Outline all expense items. Try to break them down into understandable elements. However, you do not need to break it down so small that the expense items for 15,000 USD project will take 3 pages long. Try to explain some items that other people might find difficult to understand or why it is really needed. Quantity and unit information should also be provided.	Describe the cost for each of the item.	Sum total on each line. Make sure you BOLD the final total sum.

Fundraising

The activity	The expected profit	The requirement
Provide key fund-raising activities. Thos can include membership fees, donor funding, involvement in local/cultural merchandise, support from corporate bodies, individual contributions, fundraising dinners, fundraising collaborative programs with local shops and kiosks, etc	How much do you expect to get from each of the activity. You can give the expectation in range, such as from 3,000 to 5,000 dollars.	Explain what are the requirements that must be satisfied in order to make each of the fund-raising activity possible. Most of the time, it is some initial investment (cost), partnership with other organizations, specially competency needs e.g. relying on somebody with fundraising experience who is in the Advisory Board and so on. Risk factors such as weather condition or inability to attract adequate interest should also be provided for each planned fund-raising activities.

✚ Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are not simply meant for funders or partners; they are most useful to you. Without measurement, you would not know how to adapt your plan and action in order to achieve highest impact and sustainability. Continuous evaluation ensures a better learning ability.

Activities	Outputs	Short-Run Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Objectives	Ultimate Goal
Describe what the SC does with the resources. Activities are the processes, tools, events, technology, and actions that are required in order to achieve the mission.	Describe what are the direct outputs of your activities and may include types, levels and targets of services to be delivered.	Describe what are the specific immediate changes in participants' behavior, your membership, knowledge, skills, status and level of Commitment to sustainable development. Target should be developed, both in term of quantity and quality.	Identify your intermediate outcomes that must be accomplished in order to achieve the objectives. Target should be developed, both in term of quantity and quality.	Describe your key objectives that must be accomplished to reach your ultimate goal. (based on your mission)	Describe your ultimate goal, i.e. the desired social change you try to create in the context of sustainable development

Finally, allow me to remind you that this plan and concept of action must be structured and developed with the WSCSD, other SCs and the IMs in mind. The structure that I have developed above is somewhat assumptive of the manner and nature of your operation but the bottom line for example is that your first three major partners are the WSCSD, the SCs and the IMs. Therefore in the fun-filled process of developing a full fledged group of enthusiastic young students fascinated and inspired by the need for a sustainable Earth today and tomorrow, please take due regard to the existing WSCSD Charter. It clearly spells out the nature of relationship between the three different organs in its structure like I have outlined above.

Once in a while therefore and quite regularly too, the WSCSD will require activities reports and materials for publication in its newsletters. The purpose of this is to keep the rest of the global student membership informed about what each and every SC and IM is doing. It is a critical process of sharing information that is also as important as our work itself. I urge you to take due consideration of the importance attached to drafting a structure that will improve your potential to fit within the WSCSD and also in the wider context of collaborating with other current SCs.

I am optimistic that the group you have formed will be an enthusiastic, fun-filled and energized group of young and fresh actors for sustainable development. And that you will work towards strengthening the World Students Community for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.

Contact: info@wscsd.org