



CVSA's "Taking Ownership of the SDGs" Community Workshops Take Off

CVSA's Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has advanced to a new level with the development of a workshop titled "Taking Ownership of the SDGs," which CVSA presented on International Volunteer Day, December 5, 2016 to a gathering of volunteers from several nonprofits in New York City, and again on February 17 at the West Side YMCA in partnership with the International YMCA Global Teens program.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all 193 nations of the UN, including the U.S., in September 2015, calls on volunteer and nongovernmental organizations to actively engage with their governments at all levels in their planning and implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

See centerfold on page 8 and 9 for the
2030 Sustainable Development Goals

"CVSA reported on the SDGs to CVSA members and other *ITEMS* readers from the time they were first issued in fall 2015. We found then and continue to find that most people in the United States, including people who are community leaders and advocates for economic justice and environmental protection, still do not know what the SDGs are," explained



Photo: Raymond Liang

Rayda Marquez, Director of International Programs, YMCA of Greater New York (standing, center), introduces Ame Esangbedo (standing, right), who worked with the United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV), to members of the YMCA Global Teens Program.

Yael Alonso at the International Volunteer Day SDG workshop. "There has been no media coverage and the government has been silent about it. We have to organize to bring the SDGs to every community in this country. We are asking you to join us. We will help you do this and we can teach you effective methods to involve more volunteers through your efforts."

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UN General Assembly President Opens Dialogue with Civil Society Groups to Accomplish 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

CVSA Executive Director, Susan Angus attended "Accelerating Implementation of the SDGs: A Civil Society Dialogue with H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly" on January 27, hosted by World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) at New York UN headquarters.

In his opening remarks, before taking questions from the floor, Thomson conveyed to the full room of over 75 people from various NGOs how he views the world through the lens of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that the primary job of the 71st Session of the General Assembly is to gain real momentum on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with material progress to point to at the end of the year. He called on civil society to do everything possible to help accelerate governments' actions towards implementing this universal Agenda for saving the planet and the people.

Thomson ran for President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly on the pledge to do everything possible to move the 2030 SDGs forward and was elected in June 2016. His one-year term began in September. He said our biggest problem is that the majority of humanity does not know about the SDGs "which is the master plan for the survival of their grandchildren."

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International Programs of the YMCA of Greater New York, NY
Turtle Tree Seed Biodynamic Initiative, Copake, NY



Editorial

Organize Today for a Livable World Tomorrow

Seventy-two countries have already submitted, or pledged voluntary reports this year and next to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development at the United Nations, covering national implementation plans and progress to date for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. These include countries as large as China, Mexico and India; as wealthy as Germany, Switzerland, France and Qatar; and as poor as Sierra Leone, Republic of Congo, Bolivia, the Philippines and Thailand. Other countries, such as South Africa, Ecuador and Russia have not made reports yet, but do have the 2030 SDGs written into their national development plans for the next five to fifteen years with civic engagement mechanisms in place to involve their people and nongovernmental organizations in the process.

The United States, the wealthiest industrialized country in the world, has taken no visible or announced responsibility for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our government has made no report, commissioned no one to write a plan of action and made no public announcement to the people of the U.S. about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which all 193 nations, including the U.S., agreed to adopt as urgently needed domestic policy and framework for foreign policy in September 2015.

The General Assembly agreed that if we do not achieve these Goals in every country — rich and poor — as priority, we will have an unrecognizable world, filled with more poverty, more extreme inequality and levels of environmental destruction, migration and global conflict than we do now.

Governments representing the majority of the world's population are taking the 2030 Agenda seriously, integrating the SDGs into their development plans and their budgets, and using them to prioritize domestic and foreign policy, monitoring their progress toward achieving them and being vocal about the obstacles to be overcome. This is the purpose of the HLPF on Sustainable Development at the UN; it is an arena in which to present and discuss these voluntary reports, for governments, nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders to exchange information and learn from each other.

The U.S. has the highest level of income inequality and poverty rate among developed countries, one of the lowest levels of health and well-being of all developed nations, and consumes over 24% of the world's energy, most of it not renewable, although the U.S. is a nation with only 5% of the world's population. Our government proposes no solutions for these problems. Those in office have been and still are governing

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ITEMS

COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION



ITEMS is published quarterly by **Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA)**, the consultative and coordinating body of more than 200 nongovernment, voluntary service organizations based in North America that support or place volunteers with projects and programs serving people in the U.S. and internationally. **CVSA** seeks to interpret, extend, promote and support the world of voluntary service and involvement programs, and maintain and expand the ability and right of individuals to donate their time and services to persons, groupings and communities of people in need, free of government restraint.

ITEMS is **CVSA's** newsletter information service for organizational members represented in **INVEST YOURSELF — The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities**. **ITEMS** reports and provides analysis of news related to the voluntary service field on a national and international level, as well as political and economic developments relevant to the independent voluntary service sector.

Many volunteers and volunteer organizations learn the hard way: through their own experiences, using trial and error. We find that wasteful and contrary to the basic principle of organization: that an organization is stronger than an individual. Collective experience is therefore also more powerful than that of a single individual, or, for that matter, a single organization.

Your submissions to **ITEMS** of information, news, advice, photographs and graphics depicting your work or simply your comments and concerns are instrumental to the process of growth and advancement of voluntary service as a whole. We always look forward to receiving them.

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ITEMS is free to **CVSA** members. **Subscription** rate for U.S. residents is \$15/year. Canadians and those abroad please add \$10 for additional mailing costs. Send your order and submissions of articles for publication to **CVSA**.

CVSA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable corporation with an all-volunteer staff. See back page for volunteer opportunities with **CVSA**. Your financial contributions are also urgently needed and are tax-deductible.

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Community Workshops on the SDGs

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CVSA Premiers “Taking Ownership of the SDGs” Workshop on International Volunteer Day

CVSA’s International Volunteer Day workshop, “Taking Ownership of the SDGs,” was hosted by the ATD Fourth World Movement/New York at their facility in the East Village of New York City. The event was attended by members of the International Programs of the YMCA, members of the order of the Sisters of the Religious Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM), volunteers from Good Shepherd Volunteers, an organizer from the Garífuna Health and Education Institute based in the Bronx, and other individuals from local churches, colleges and community groups in New York.

After introducing the content and background to the 2030 Agenda and the process agreed to by all 193 member nations of the UN, including the U.S., as to how each nation is to implement the Goals in their own country and in cooperation with others, the discussion moved to why “we the people” have to take action to see that these Goals are achieved in this country and with nations around the world. The discussion then moved to plans of action each organization can adopt to educate and mobilize their communities and constituencies to participate in the SDG campaign.

Rita Rochford, CVSA volunteer and supporter and active member of the First Presbyterian Church of New York City where CVSA has also made a presentation about the SDGs to their Senior Forum said, “We need to hit the government over the head with these Goals because they won’t implement them on their own! Most Presbyterian churches don’t know about the 2030 Goals and all the Church and Society groups should be aligning themselves with the SDGs. It’s like Standing Rock, where people of all different types — veterans, indigenous people, environmental activists and others — are joining together, and that’s what the religious community needs to do about the SDGs. All the churches should be promoting this.”

Sr. Virginia Dorgan shared with the group how the sisters of the Eastern American Province of RSHM met in June 2016 to align their work with various community organizations that address needs of the poor, immigration rights, housing,



Photo: CVSA

On December 5, 2016 International Volunteer Day, at the Fourth World Movement headquarters in NYC, CVSA Administrative Assistant Yael Alonso, explains the definition of ‘sustainable development’ and the necessity to identify economic, social and environmental policies that are obstacles to upholding this principle in order to organize for change.



Photo: CVSA

Volunteers and staff people from five nonprofit organizations, faith congregations, and students gathered on December 5, 2016 for CVSA’s International Volunteer Day workshop on “Taking Ownership” of the SDGs.

keeping the rivers clean, to the 17 SDGs as an example of how to link what you are already doing locally with the promotion of the Goals nationwide.

Rayda Marquez, Director of the International Programs of the Greater New York YMCA spoke about the importance of getting this campaign into the hands of young people who care about what is happening to people and the planet, and invited CVSA to hold the workshop at the West Side YMCA with a focus on youth. This soon became a partnership between CVSA and International

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A proud sponsor of CVSA’s International Volunteer Day Event and Campaign for the Sustainable Development Goals



Community Workshops on the SDGs

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Programs of the YMCA of Greater New York through Marquez's initiative, with plans now in the works to bring the SDG campaign to other YMCAs in all boroughs of New York.

International Program of YMCA Partners With CVSA's SDG Community Education Campaign

On February 17, youth from communities in the Bronx, Brooklyn Harlem and Queens attended CVSA's "Youth Taking Ownership of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals" workshop, co-sponsored by International Programs of the YMCA of Greater New York, held at the West Side YMCA on West 63rd Street. Several high school teachers and guidance counselors involved with the YMCA Global Teens program also participated.

Mr. Jordi Llopart, former NY Office Chief of the United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV) and now Executive Secretary of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/United



Photo: Raymond Liang

(From L to R) Ame Esangbedo, Rayda Marquez, Director of International Services, YMCA of Greater New York; Yael Alonso, Administrative Assistant of CVSA; Susan Angus, Executive Director of CVSA; Jordi Llopart, from UN Development Programme.

Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Executive Board, was the honored guest speaker. Llopart attended, upon CVSA's request, as a volunteer and concerned global citizen, happy to have the opportunity to share with young people in the U.S. his personal knowledge of how the SDGs were developed and hear their questions and ideas.

Llopart opened his presentation with a short promotional video showing dozens of celebrities from around the world speaking in support of the 2030 Agenda and emphasizing that the 17 Goals must be promoted to everyone in every country and involve people from all walks of life to make sure they are carried out by all governments along with the involvement of the people.

Llopart highlighted the four elements to the 2030 Agenda: 1) The Declaration, which contains the vision and principles of the Agenda; 2) the Results Framework, which include the 17 Goals and 169 targets and the "integral and indivisible" nature of the Goals and targets; 3) the Means of Implementation, which include the national parliaments, regional and local authorities, the academic community, civil society, youth, volunteer groups and many others, as well as global partnership among nations and among the people of the world; and 4) the Mechanisms for Monitoring and Reviewing Compliance by each nation, through "national reports" submitted on a voluntary basis at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) held each July.

He emphasized that, "The 2030 Agenda is a call to action in which the signatory states declare, 'It is an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people and for this reason we believe that it has guaranteed success.'"

CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus, and Administrative Assistant Yael Alonso then led a reading of each of the 17 Goals with a brief discussion on each one, offering facts pertinent to problems and needs in the United States in relation to each of the Goals.

JOIN CVSA

More than ever, organizations and individuals doing the serious work of serving people in need and building systemic solutions to these problems must have ways and means to work together, learn from each other and own methods for effective involvement for more volunteers to strengthen the voluntary service and action movement.



Join CVSA to reach people looking for the best way to invest their time and skill and make a real difference by being included in the *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue.

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Photo: Raymond Liang

Jordi Llopart, Secretary of the Executive Board of the UNDP, UNOP, and UNFPA, (standing) greets young people involved in the YMCA Global Teens Program who came to learn about the SDGs.



Photo: Raymond Liang

Cody Gordon, science teacher (left), and Carl Jackman, social worker (right), from Academy of Young Writers High School in Brooklyn, NY.

Aaron Gonzalez, a LaGuardia Community College student, commented on Goal 11 (“Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”) saying, “there are enough empty homes from all the foreclosures in the country to house every homeless person and family, why doesn’t the government just make that available for people?”

Others in the audience offered solutions to each Goal, or elucidated on how urgent each goal is, particularly in relation to increasing poverty, lack of decent paying jobs, growing economic and social inequality, high cost of education, pollution of our water by large corporations, continued destruction of the environment, and lack of maintenance of the infrastructure.

Rayda Marquez announced that the YMCA Global Teens Program will make CVSA’s Community Education Campaign their project for the year and will not only use the Toolkit CVSA has produced, but will also help CVSA develop and add more tools.

Ame Esangbedo, who is from The Gambia and just completed a three year contract working for the UN Volunteer Programme (UNV) in New York and has attended a number of CVSA events, also participated in this workshop to learn more about what grassroots communities in the U.S. were doing to promote the SDGs.

Alonso wrapped up the discussion, “It’s up to us to act to make sure that more people are aware of the Sustainable Development Agenda and that these 17 Goals become a priority for our government at all levels. We must start with getting the word out in our own communities so that the people who are suffering the most from the lack of these Goals being achieved have a say in how they are implemented and are organized to work for the implementation of the SDGs, including monitoring government progress — or lack thereof — to hold responsible government levels accountable. We encourage everyone to use our Community Education Toolkit and start your own campaign toward

taking ownership of the SDGs, including determining strategies for holding governments accountable to their responsibility for implementation of this agenda.”

Llopart invited all in attendance to bring reports on the results of their projects to the United Nations through CVSA’s Special NGO Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council and also through the International YMCA. He said, “No matter how big or small, it is important to share your work to take ownership of the SDGs with others at the United Nations.”

High School Teachers Eager to Bring the SDGs to their Classrooms

Cody Gordon, an 8th Grade science teacher at the Academy for Young Writers High School in the East New York section of Brooklyn who attended the workshop with other teachers and counselors involved with the Global Teens program, said he plans to use CVSA’s presentation to bring the SDGs to his science classes, and then approach his fellow teachers about doing a school-wide project. He thanked CVSA for bringing this to their attention and said it is extremely important and very exciting. CVSA will share Gordon’s accomplishments with other teachers, to be able to add tools to the SDG Toolkit that will be useful for teachers.

Get Your Copy of CVSA’s SDG Community Educators’ Toolkit!

CVSA’s SDG Community Education Toolkit is designed to start a discussion with your staff, volunteers and members on how your organization can make the SDGs known in your community and determine what actions you can take as a group or in alliance with others to inform local and state government officials that we urgently need these Goals carried out, and that you expect to have a voice in their planning and implementation.

CVSA designed the workshop format to engage community-based organizations, faith congregations, college

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Community Workshops on the SDGs

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clubs, high school classes, service-providing nonprofits and other activist and organizing groupings in promoting and monitoring the achievement of the SDGs in the U.S. through plans of action they develop through their participation in these workshops.

The Toolkit, which includes a power-point presentation and formats for organizing the workshop, makes it possible for leaders to reproduce these workshops with their own community and constituencies, and more rapidly expand this nationwide Community Education Campaign. It is available to CVSA member organizations as well as anyone who attends CVSA's presentations and signs up with the Community Education Campaign. A copy of the official document "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" is also included, to provide the complete text for review prior to the presentations.

Additional tools, such as posters for mass distribution, facts sheets relevant to each of the 17 Goals, other educational material, sample letters, phone agendas to local elected officials, will be added to the Toolkit and sent to everyone involved as

they are developed and used. Volunteers from CVSA member organizations are urgently needed to help develop organizing tools that can be used by their own group and others, to take ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals by the citizenry. Volunteers with graphic design skills are needed for poster and leaflet design.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help design posters, slogans, educational material and other tools, please contact CVSA. CVSA also needs volunteers for the production of the next edition of *INVEST YOURSELF: The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities*. IY features full- and part-time volunteer opportunities with hundreds of organizations across the country. The new edition, to be published this fall, will provide an index guiding readers to find volunteer placements pertaining to one or more of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

To schedule a CVSA presentation on the SDGs by CVSA representatives with your organization, school or faith group, or to obtain a copy of the CVSA SDG Community Education Toolkit, please contact Yael Alonso, CVSA Administrative Assistant at (718) 482-8724. Let's Take Ownership and Transform Our World!!!



CVSA thanks the
United Methodist
General Board of Global Ministries

for their support of CVSA's nationwide
Community Education Campaign
for the Implementation of
2030 Sustainable Development Goals



This includes CVSA's work mobilizing grassroots participation of community organizations to take ownership of the 2030 SDGs by engaging in planning, implementation and monitoring of the 2030 SDGs in the US.

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GA President Thomson Dialogue with Civil Society

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Thomson reported that he has written to each head of government individually to ask that “the logic” of the SDGs, not just the rote 17 Goals, but the universal and integrated logic of them and the precipice of unsustainability that we are heading towards if we do not achieve them — be put in school curriculums in all schools around the world. He said this was imperative so that “those young people that are taught about it today will be the ones that transform those very things that I’ve



Photo: WFUNA

Peter Thomson, President of the United Nations General Assembly (center) responding to a question from the audience.

highlighted: the eradication of poverty and the changing of consumption and production patterns, so that when they’re handing this world over to *their* children, there will actually be a world. There may not be, if we continue the way we’re going.” Thomson reported receiving some very positive responses to this so far from countries in both the north and south, and he will continue to pursue this through the formal governmental channels.

On the informal side of his endeavor to make headway for the SDGs this year, he aims to go to Silicon Valley and meet with tech companies to ask them to help take the 17 Goals to humanity by applying their corporate responsibility and use all the ways they have for getting information out to people,

such as through their cell phones and the games they put out. Thomson illustrated his point: “Some celebrity falls on their backside, and these guys know how to make sure that everyone in the world knows within two hours that that backside has been bruised. And that is so irrelevant to our well-being on this planet. Totally irrelevant information. But these guys have the tools to be able to communicate that story within a matter of hours!” Thomson plans to find out if these tech companies will help get the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to everyone.

At the opening of questions from the floor, a representative from Impact 2030 asked Thomson if he thought global leaders are taking the 2030 Agenda seriously enough. He said, “Governments come and governments go. The fact is that all 193 countries are committed to the SDGs. And we can hold them to account. From my experience, I have yet to hear anyone speak against them at the head of government level and ministerial level. I did go to China and to India the month before I took up office and was very well received by both countries, by their heads of government and they went in detail into how they have absorbed the SDGs into their national plans, both at central government and regional government levels. So that was really encouraging, you could see it first hand.”



Photo: WFUNA

Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director, (far right) asks Peter Thomson for further advice to nongovernment organizations promoting the SDGs at the community level, particularly in the U.S.

When recognized to address the assembly, Angus referenced Thomson’s statement that most of humanity still does not know about the SDGs. Angus pointed to the total absence of media coverage in the U.S. in particular, where the largest corporate media machines in the world are based, along with silence from U.S. government leaders about the SDGs. Angus explained CVSA’s decision to launch a volunteer-driven Nationwide Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the SDGs to mobilize people who are on the front lines of the poverty and other conditions the 17 Goals aim to change. She asked Thomson if he had advice for NGOs on what else they can do to generate the needed involvement of the real stakeholders in the official government processes that are supposed to be taking place to implement them.

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Transforming Our World: The 2030

On September 25, 2015, all 193 member nations of the UN, including the United States, voted unanimously to strive for the achievement of these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in every country — developing and developed — as national domestic and international policy priority. Each country, including the U.S., signed on, stating: “On behalf of the peoples we serve, we have adopted a historic decision on a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative Goals and targets. We commit ourselves to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030...”

From the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** *Preamble* and *Call to Action*:

“...All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.”

“...The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. ... They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

“... We can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet. The world will be a better place in 2030 if we succeed in our objectives.

“...What we are announcing today — an Agenda for global action for the next 15 years — is a charter for people and planet in the twenty-first century. Children and young women and men are critical agents of change and will find in the new Goals a platform to channel their infinite capacities for activism into the creation of a better world.

“...We the peoples” are the celebrated opening words of the Charter of the United Nations. It is “we the peoples” who are embarking today on the road to 2030. Our journey will involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community — and all people. Millions have already engaged with, and will own, this Agenda. It is an Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people — and this, we believe, will ensure its success.

Read the whole 35-page document titled *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>.

CVSA’s Call for the Implementation of the SDGs:

CVSA calls on the U.S. government to carry out its pledge to implement the SDGs in the U.S. and form a national SDG Coordinating Council. State councils should also be set up to oversee data collection, draw up implementation plans, coordinate policies and monitor the progress or implementation in their state and submit those to the national coordinating body. *Make the process public and open.* Members on the councils should include representatives from nongovernment volunteer organizations, faith-based service organizations, social service administrators, educators, labor leaders, scientists, poor people’s representatives, family farm leaders, health advocates, legal justice specialists, environmental specialists, religious leaders, credit unions and community banks, and small business representatives.

In the absence of governmental action to date commensurate with the task, we call on CVSA member organizations to “take ownership.” Start with the work your organization is already doing and promote the SDGs in your community through that work. Bring people into this discussion. Make plans to advance the SDGs and keep government accountable. Contribute information for CVSA to include in reports to the UN on status of implementation of these Goals in your area based on your organization’s direct experience. Join CVSA in building this movement to transform our world and leave no one behind.



30 Sustainable Development Goals



Goal 1. End Poverty in all its forms everywhere.



Goal 2. End Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.



Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.



Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.



Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.



Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.



Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



Goal 15. Protect, restore, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for Sustainable Development.

Join CVSA's nationwide "Take Ownership of the SDGs" Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in the U.S. as well as around the world.

Call CVSA (718) 482-8724 to schedule a presentation to your organization, school, workplace or place of worship or in your community at large; and for a copy of CVSA's SDG Organizer's Toolkit.

July 10 to 19, 2017

The 2017 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) will be held at UN Headquarters.

Add the information you have on the status of the SDGs in your community, with your proposals for action, into CVSA's 2017 report to the HLPF.

**Submissions to CVSA due
May 20, 2017**

Make these Goals a reality here as well as abroad.
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Organize Today for a Livable World Tomorrow

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by crisis and in reaction to the failures of previous short-term policies. Long-term planning, where it is needed most — to address problems of poverty, social inequality or social justice, to improve the lives of working people — is not permitted. How many times has the government shut down or been on the brink of a shut down until the next year's budget is finally passed on an emergency basis by Congress?

Who in the U.S. government, at any level, will stand up and fight for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and fight for a process and plan to achieve the 17 SDGs *in the U.S.*?

It is our world. We cannot wait for change to be made by those who continue to create policy and take actions that exploit our country's, and the world's, population and resources for their own interests. It is up to us to take the lead in teaching our communities about the SDGs in places of worship, schools and workplaces, in order to organize a groundswell of the people to demand our representatives take a stand for the SDGs, starting with local government levels. Local politicians in town, municipal, county and state government need to know that you and your community take the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as the best blueprint for a long-term strategy to transform our world to one in which everyone can live in prosperity, well-being and peace.

Your leadership in bringing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals into the life and work of your community is the most essential part of CVSA's campaign to strengthen and expand volunteer service and action towards a better world. We are not just building *awareness* of the Goals — we are connecting action and participation to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As community groups across the country take the lead and engage all levels of government, starting locally, and acting in solidarity with nations around the world also implementing these Goals, we can generate the motion to involve the volunteers whose time, skills and caring are needed to build the programs that address the real problems of our society at their root.


Make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the people's agenda in the U.S. too.

Put the SDGs on your agenda — and join us in transforming our world. If you are not already volunteering with an organization that is promoting the SDGs and working toward one or more of the Goals, call CVSA and get a copy of *INVEST YOURSELF*. Leadership roles await you here on our all-volunteer staff at CVSA as well as with organizations throughout the U.S. and the world that need you. Join CVSA and build this volunteer movement. 

GA President Thomson Dialogue with Civil Society

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Thomson responded saying, "I read the *New York Times* cover to cover over breakfast every day... and the statement you made is absolutely true. There is no mention, ever, on this subject. I guess this is pretty true across the USA." He said he speaks about the 2030 Agenda and 17 Goals everywhere he goes in all formal and informal settings. He speaks to cab drivers and doormen and everyone — and people don't know. Thomson said that he will write an Op-Ed for the *New York Times*, and hopes they will publish it. He said what Angus described is needed, and "Congratulations on the volunteer work you are doing in that regard. More power to you and people like you."

Born and raised in the Pacific Island state of Fiji, with an extensive background in rural development and foreign affairs, Thomson served as Fiji's Permanent Representative to the UN since 2010 and served concurrently as Fiji's Ambassador to Cuba until taking office in September 2016 as General Assembly (GA) President. In 2013 Thomson served as Chair of the G-77 and is responsible prior to that for bringing Fiji into the G-77 which is the largest negotiating bloc of the UN with 133 developing nation members. The UN General Assembly is made up of 193 Member States, who each have one vote and provides a forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the UN Charter. 

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CVSA Brings 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Campaign to Camphill Village USA

Over 100 members of the Camphill Village USA community in Copake, New York filled Fountain Hall on January 10, to hear CVSA's presentation about the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and discuss how they as a community can promote them.

Camphill Village USA is one of 11 Camphill communities in North America, part of a larger international social movement of over 100 communities where adults with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and social disadvantage live in supported communities to reach their potential.

CVSA presented the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to the group, and explained the background of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, written by representatives of 193 nations along with thousands of nongovernmental and civil society organizations that all agreed these Goals must be achieved in every country or we will not have a livable world in a matter of a few decades.

"We explained the example of why Goal 6, 'Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all,' is just as applicable in advanced industrial nations as it is in poorer, less developed countries by talking about how the water was poisoned in Flint, Michigan and has still not been resolved. We also spoke about what happened in Detroit, Michigan, where over 30,000 families had no running water because the city had cut their water service when they couldn't afford to pay the high water rates," said Yael Alonso, CVSA Administrative Assistant. "A community member asked, 'Why haven't people gotten their water back yet in Flint?' We explained that the city and the state have not replaced the corroded pipes yet with modern infrastructure to keep the water clean. She commented, 'Well, it's not rocket science. They should just replace the pipes!'" CVSA identified government prioritization as the primary problem, refusing to spend money on such things as infrastructure improvements that would ensure quality of life for people in the U.S. Alonso explained that it's necessary to organize so that together, concerned people can tackle problems like this.

There were several questions from the audience about what happened to the children in Detroit after their water was shut off, because they were concerned about the children being separated from their parents by the state due to lack of access to safe water in the home. Alonso explained, "In some cases mothers moved in with relatives so that their children would not be taken away from them by the state."

Ernesto, a community member, said that he was interested in doing something to save the water system in New York from contamination, especially from PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls) that contaminated the Hudson River so severely in the

past. The manufacture of PCB is now banned, but the chemical is still found in rivers, fish and soil due to industrial contamination decades ago, and is still found in insulating fluids in heavy-duty electrical equipment in power plants, industries and large buildings across the country. Ernesto said he would be very interested in having members of the Copake Camphill community go speak to other Camphill communities across the United States about these issues, and to then send Camphill representatives to speak to the UN about the efforts of their communities to implement the SDGs. Alonso offered CVSA's assistance with that endeavor.

One of the Camphill volunteers asked, "Since this agreement was adopted during the Obama administration in September 2015, what do you think will happen now under the Trump administration?" Alonso responded by pointing out that since September 2015 when the SDGs were adopted, CVSA has found nothing has been done to promote or implement the Goals by the U.S. government. He said, there's no way to know if the new administration will be any different, but no matter who is in office, we know we need to organize to keep government accountable to the SDGs and fight for them to be our nation's policy guide and mandate.

Marianne, a community member, made a comment on Goal 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all." She said that this was an important Goal because she has a hard time finding employment, because when she goes into town she is labeled as "retarded" and not given serious consideration by potential employers even though she can do the work as well as anyone else, and that she wants equal opportunities for everyone to succeed.



Photo: Camphill Village


Camphill Villagers work on developing and caring for the Turtle Tree Biodynamic Seed Initiative's Garden.



In the wrap-up of the discussion Ted Todd, the community member chairing the Forum, confirmed that everyone agreed the SDGs were important and that the community should do something about them. He said the group would discuss at their next meeting the suggestions CVSA organizers had made at the meeting about ways the community could promote the SDGs to other Camphill communities and also to the wider community outside of Camphill in Hudson County.

Todd reported to CVSA the following month that the seven-person steering group of the Community Forum has taken on the SDGs as their project with a focus on Goal 4 (quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all) and Goal 8 (productive employment and decent work for all.) They are working out their specific plans, but their goal is to implement

the 17 Goals in the life and work of the Camphill community and at the same time to go out and teach their methods of both providing decent and productive work for everyone and running the farm in a totally sustainable way. They want to reach out to other organizations who work with developmentally disabled people to share their successful methods of making it possible for people to live productive and socially fulfilling lives, and also to farmers in the area to share and offer to teach their successful ecologically sustainable methods in farming.

He asked for CVSA to come meet with them again in the late spring, once they have formulated their plan more specifically, to provide advice and training in methods of outreach to implement their plan. 

Sowing Seeds of Sustainability

Foreword: In January, Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) organizers visited Camphill Village USA to speak about the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and received a tour of the farm and the various workshops that are part of this Camphill community, including Turtle Tree Biodynamic Seed Initiative. Turtle Tree is an independent business operating in partnership with the Village. After learning about CVSA's Community Education Campaign for the Implementation of the 2030 SDGs, Lisa Millette, Assistant Garden Manager, offered to write this article for ITEMS to share their experience in cultivating an ecologically sustainable community. Camphill Community welcomes visitors and people like Lisa will gladly talk about their work with anyone interested in learning more.

By Lisa Millette

Camphill Village USA is an integrated community where people with developmental differences are living a life with dignity, equality, and sense of purpose. Camphill has practiced

biodynamic agriculture since coming to Copake, NY in 1961. The Biodynamic principles focus on developing a sustainable and ecologically conscious community, which we call "farm individuality."

In 1924, Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher, gave a series of lectures to farmers and gardeners in Silesia, Germany (now Kobierzyce, Poland) that are now translated into English and published as "Spiritual Foundations of Agriculture." The farmers approached Steiner because they had noticed that crop yields were lower, tried and true seed strains were no longer performing as they had and there was a feeling that nutrient density and quality of crops had lessened – a familiar story to many farmers in the United States. These teachings have since been taken, researched and expanded upon by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, Maria Thun, and others, and given the name Biodynamic Agriculture. Steiner's work influenced Karl Konig, who would later start Camphill Village based on Steiner's principles.

The concept of Biodynamic Agriculture and farm individuality is that all the components will support one another and build each other up if managed conscientiously. Therefore, over time, as the components become stronger, so will the whole,

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Photo: Camphill Village

Villagers working in the Greenhouse to make soil and pot the seeds.



Photo: Camphill Village

The Seed Shop Crew at work in the Greenhouse.



Seeds of Sustainability

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e.g., as the compost quality increases, so does the soil quality and the food quality and quality of human and animal nutrition. The same can be assumed if there is a weakness in a single component – if the compost is not taken care of there is a reduction in the health of the other components: the strength of soil, produce, humans, and animals all decrease. The same is true with seed. If crops are not grown and handled to promote the health and vitality of the seed, its effects are felt in the soil, produce, humans and animals. And the cycle goes on. If we look at farm individuality in this way, we see the importance of taking great care with each component at every point in the cycle.

A farm individuality works toward becoming wholly sustainable – all parts support the whole in their multi-functionality. For example, Camphill Village's cows produce milk for consumption and processing, which supports our human life. The cows' manure is cared for and transformed into beautiful compost, supporting plant life in our gardens. The farmers take the cows from pasture to pasture, and this grazing helps keep the pastures healthy and vibrant, supporting the pasture ecosystem – and the list goes on. In turn, the cows receive what they require from the farm: the grass they graze, the hay they consume over the winter, the farmers that milk them and walk them from pasture to pasture, and so on.

Due to our farm individuality model, when Camphill Village heard that a new biodynamic seed initiative was looking for a home in the late 1990's, we saw this as another piece of the farm individuality that would make the system more whole. Until then, seed was a component that had come from outside Camphill's farm individuality and, often, the methods in which that seed was grown were unknown. In 1998 Turtle Tree Seed Biodynamic Seed Initiative came to Camphill Village and has been a part of the farm system since.

Beyond being a piece of Camphill's farm individuality, seed saving has become a crucial piece in conservation and upkeep of biodiversity. Without this conservation, our food system, *our whole ecosystem*, is placed in peril. The protection and saving of existing plant varieties and restoration of rare or "lost" varieties ensures that there are plants to support the functions of other living things on earth. Plants can sequester carbon, feed us (whether directly or indirectly through animal life), feed insects, and work with mycelium and microorganisms to process nutrients from the air, sun, and soil to build-up ecosystems that sustain all that is living.

Approximately 200 people live in Camphill Village, Copake. Those that live and work in the village are an important part of the farm individuality. All who live and work at Camphill Village are employed in an area that enriches and supports their own lives, the lives of others, and the land we live on.

Camphill is a "human settlement" which is "inclusive, resilient, and sustainable" – per SDG Goal 11.

There are work groups of mixed abilities that have been charged with the caring for a component of our farm individuality at Camphill. The farmers care for the livestock, pasture, and head up the compost operation. The estate crew cares for the forest and non-pastured land including common green spaces. We are actively "protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests [...] and halting and reversing land degradation and [especially through our seed saving work] halting biodiversity loss" – per SDG Goal 15.

The vegetable garden, herb garden and seed garden crews care for their respective gardens and corresponding compost heaps. The people in the homes make sure food scraps and other compostable materials are separated and accessible to be fed to the pigs or added to the compost piles. The cooks ensure meal quality and nutritional balance. Working with the earth, animals, and each other in this way "ensures sustainable consumption and production patterns" — per SDG Goal 12. Those not directly involved in land work have responsibilities in the bakery, candle shop, weavery, woodshop, and other production-oriented work places, while others have work in homes: cleaning, cooking, or caring for others.

Above all, no matter the job, work is done in community, honoring each individual, their contribution, and the product itself, whether growing seed, culturing cheese, weaving a cloth dinner napkin, or nurturing a growing cabbage head. Camphill, indeed, "promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" – per SDG Goal 8.


For more information about Camphill Village USA in Copake, NY, please visit www.camphillvillage.org. For more information on Turtle Tree Biodynamic Seed Initiative please go to www.turtletreeseed.org and to learn more about the farm individuality and Biodynamic Agriculture, www.biodynamics.com.

Postscript: In December of 2014 the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that topsoils were





being degraded at the rate of 30 soccer fields every minute and by the year 2050 the global amount of arable and productive land per person would be only a quarter of the level it was in 1960. Topsoil degradation is caused by chemical-heavy farming techniques, deforestation, and global warming. Camphill's approach to farming is an example of how those practices can be replaced with sustainable practices in agriculture, starting with how the seeds are produced, cared for and distributed. Currently the ten largest seed corporations in the world dominate three quarters of the world seed market; the top three of these — Monsanto, Dupont and Syngenta — control 53% of the market. Monsanto controls 93% of the U.S. soybean seed market. These monopolies are able to raise the price of seeds every year, hurting small farmers, and have greater and greater control over what is grown and eaten. According to the FAO, over the course of the 20th century, approximately 75% of crop diversity in the world has been lost due to the industrialization of agriculture run by large corporations. In contrast, Camphill's approach provides an example of how a community can both take care of the land, making it sustainably productive, and take care of the people living on it.

There are many organizations in the U.S. and around the world that are demonstrating sustainable approaches to running farms and growing food, and better ways to treat the people doing the work and the population sustained by what is produced. Camphill provides one model that demonstrates what can be accomplished by a community that values the contributions of each individual living and working within the community, working toward the common good of everyone in the community and taking care of the land supporting the community at the same time. Camphill has many full-time and part-time volunteer opportunities in all of their communities. See CVSA's *The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities*, INVEST YOURSELF, for more information. 

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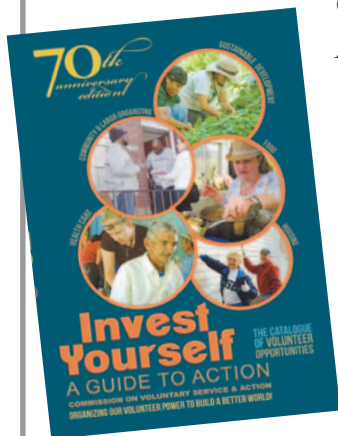
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