

# The Legacy of Sustainability

Marsha A. Tongel, Ph.D.

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*“The question of reaching sustainability is not about if we will have enough energy, enough food, or other tangible resources – those we have. The question is: will there be enough leaders in time?”*

(Broman & Robèrt 2018)

It doesn't take much to see that the world today is besieged by conflict, chaos and major issues – Economic and social stress, political dissension, lack of leadership, and environmental/earth changes. These issues have deep roots and systemic implications. Richard Ackoff (1974), a noted American organizational theorist and pioneer of systems theory stated, “Every problem interacts with other problems and is therefore part of a set of interrelated problems, a system of problems.... I choose to call such a system a mess (p.21).” In addition to many of today's problems being interrelated, we find that due to cultural, political, social and economic differences, that there is no “correct” view of the problem and a multitude of contradictory solutions.

These deep and systemic issues will not easily nor quickly be resolved, meaning that most of these concerns will have to be dealt with by future generations. As the quote above reflects, the real problem may not be that we will lack resources, but rather the leadership that will be needed to preserve and use the resources that we do have. Today's youth, as tomorrow's leaders, will be confronting these issues that will affect both their survivability as well as that of the planet. Yet, what legacy are we leaving to future generations to help prepare them to address these concerns? It is clear that the approaches and methods that we have used in the past have not been effective. A different type of thinking, creativity, values and spirit are needed to perceive and solve these multi-dimensional, systemic, multi-cultural, global issues.

## **UNITED NATIONS AGENDA for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Of major concern on many levels and by many individuals is the issue of the sustainability of our planet and our society. The complexity of insuring a sustainable planet and society fully demonstrates the complex and system work that needs to be done to insure that there is a safe, secure and healthy world for future generations. On September 25, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly addressed this concern and

adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a new set of goals collectively called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which address critical, environmental, social, and political and economic challenges that we see in the world today (United Nations Sustainable Goals, n.d.). This is an ambitious agenda and also a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 goals cover almost every aspect of everyday and human existence, protecting and preserving the earth's resources while moving us towards a world that is more economically and socially just.

## UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**End poverty in all its forms everywhere**



**End hunger, achieve food security & improved nutrition & promote sustainable agriculture**



**Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**



**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**



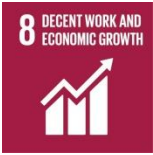
**Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**



**Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**



**Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**



**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**



**Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**



**Reduce inequality within and among countries**



**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**



**Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**



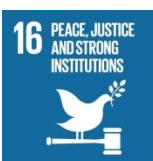
**Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**



**Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**



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



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



## Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

### EDUCATING our YOUTH

It may be adults who begin the conversation on meeting the United Nation's agenda for sustainability, but it will really be our youth who need to address these issues. Are they prepared as future leaders having to set priorities and make decisions, while considering the needs of others in a global picture? Do they have the key skills that will be needed? Are they currently being introduced to concepts such as systems thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving in the current educational system? It is our responsibility to prepare today's youth to become the future leaders who will inherit these issues and need to respond to the concern about sustainability. Not only do we need to provide them with knowledge about what is required for sustainability and future stability; we need to offer the skills to address these issues, as well as provide guidance, support and encouragement.

### LEGACY WISDOM SCHOOL and the SDGs

As much of this is not integrated into the current formal educational systems, it will require programming outside of traditional education to teach, guide and inspire our youth. An example of the application of knowledge towards meeting the sustainability goals is the *LEGACY* Wisdom School for Children and Youth. A legacy is something that is transmitted or received from an ancestor or the past and provided as a benefit to future generations. The *LEGACY* program is a multi-discipline, multi-generational and multi-ethnic learning series that helps to prepare future generations in new ways to deal with critical issues. The program offers age focused teachings and tools from various cultures and disciplines to help them evolve into the type of problem solvers, leaders, designers and communicators needed to address global social, economic and environmental issues. The *LEGACY* program imparts teachings from the elders of various cultures and wisdom keepers from various disciplines. It shares cultural, historical, geographic, environmental, spiritual, and scientific based teachings from perspectives that are not generally provided in a traditional academic environment. Concepts, tenets, and values are shared through stories, teachings, movies, experiments, music, art, and dance.

*LEGACY* is not just an **educational experience** but a **character development journey**. In today's world, the importance of youth being able to acquire wisdom tempered with integrity cannot be overstated. Many of the heroes and leaders that youth have traditionally esteemed as models—athletes, politicians, business leaders,

etc. – have left much to be desired regarding integrity and character. Legacy’s goal is to reach out to wisdom teachings that provide **educational enhancement** and **advance integrity and values** that **allow for the optimal development** of an individual and benefit the **building of positive interpersonal relationships and strong communities**.

The **LEGACY** Wisdom School consists of a variety of age –focused programs, each building upon one another. Curriculum has been developed within the various levels to meet many of the United Nation’s Sustainable Goals. A breakdown of the curriculum is as follows:

The elementary school program, called **Moonbeams and Sunrays**, is aimed at providing 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders with a baseline of teachings on respecting and honoring self and our relationship to earth and nature. A series of ten modules is separated into two different tracks that focus on providing a hands-on experience for children to learn about their natural environment, their role in that environment and the interrelationship between them and their environment. The overall goals of the program are:

- 1) Appreciating the importance and richness of diversity in nature and the environment;
- 2) Gain a greater understanding of the dynamic interrelationship between self and the environment;
- 3) Appreciate the resources of earth and the gifts of nature;
- 4) Afford opportunities to learn about the knowledge of past and present Wisdom Keepers; and
- 5) Offer forums for dialogue and sharing to enhance learning, understanding and acceptance of each other.

Specific programs include:

- **Water, Water Everywhere**
- **Did You Hug a Tree Today?**™
- **Take Two Leaves and Call Me in the Morning**™
- **Rock On!!!!**™
- **Animal Speak**
- **Walkabout**
- **Stardust in my Eyes**™
- **Which Totem are you Toting?**™
- **Everyone has a Story**
- **Teachings of the Sacred Hoop and Right Relations**

This curriculum addresses SDGs #3, 4, 6, 15 & 16 and provides a platform for the next level of programs.

The middle school program focuses on looking at the complexity of interrelationships, cultural diversity, and the values that are required to develop self-respect and healthy family, peer and community relationships. Called the ***Fifth Dimension Initiates***, the curriculum recognizes that we are all interconnected and that each of us has a purpose and goodness that is needed to benefit the whole. Further, in alignment with what many of the newer organizational, change management and systems theorists are supporting, it stresses that we need to evolve from seeing situations and problems with just our head and hands to also seeing with our heart. Or as Martin Luther King (1963) so aptly stated, “One day we will learn that the heart can never be totally right if the head is totally wrong. Only through the bringing together of head and heart-intelligence and goodness shall man rise to a fulfillment of his true nature.” New skills and new ways of relating to self and others are needed to develop the leadership that evolves from this newly emerging paradigm. The goals of the middle school program are:

- 1) Developing self-awareness and self-respect;
- 2) Appreciating the importance and richness of diversity and difference in others;
- 3) Understanding the complexity of interpersonal relationships;
- 4) Offer forums for dialogue and sharing to enhance learning, understanding and acceptance of each other; and
- 5) Creating a foundation for future leadership.

The ***Fifth Dimension Initiate*** program includes the following curriculum:

- **OURstory: Creating a New Future through Improved Relationships**
- **What’s in Your Cultural Backpack?™**
- ***Gender~Link™***
- **Walking the Medicine Wheel**
- **Do You Hear What I Hear?**
- **Initiation into the Divine Feminine & Divine Masculine**
- **Learning from the Words of the Master Wisdom Keepers**

The program addresses SDGs #3, 4, 6, 15 & 16 and strengthens the ability of youth to see the richness in the diversity of themselves and others and how to learn from and work with others who are different. It sets the stage for learning more about cooperation and collaboration in the next level.

We are living during a monumental time in which humanity is experiencing a myriad of issues that require a shift to higher consciousness to identify and address. This requires developing and working out of a new paradigm that recognizes new skills are needed to prepare youth to lead and solve the myriad of issues that they will inherit from previous generations. Traditional leadership development is not adequate to prepare youth to develop workable solutions for these complex, global concerns. The ***New Design Leaders***™ educational programming concentrates on providing high school and college youth with the teachings and tools needed to perceive, problem solve and become Architects of a ***New Future***™ paradigm. The goals of the program are to:

- 1) Provide awareness and skills in seeing problems through a system thinking lens.
- 2) Offer a new and alternative problem solving model that sees issues through the 5C paradigm of Creativity, Contemplation, Critical Thinking, Collaboration and Cultural Awareness.
- 3) Help youth understand the many facets of their socio-cultural experience, values and environment that influence upon their leadership style and capabilities.
- 4) Share new techniques that help to foster balanced leadership and strengthen capacities to lead during difficult and chaotic times.
- 5) Offer forums for dialogue and sharing to enhance learning, understanding and acceptance of each other; and
- 6) Create a foundation for future leadership.

The specific modules offered include:

- **OURstory: Visioning & Leading a New Future**™
- **Connecting the Dots: Seeing Systems**™
- **Understanding Complexity through a 5C Paradigm**™
- **The Leadership Prism**™
- **How to be a Contrarian Leader in Difficult & Chaotic Times**™
- **Integrated Leadership: Leading from the Head & Heart**™
- **Learning from the Words of the Master Wisdom Keepers**
- **Sacred Leadership; Sacred Economics**

They address SDGs #3, 4, 6, 16 & 17. An additional program called ChangAgent 2030 is being developed which would integrate technology to inform, guide and connect youth so that they could take action on SDGs # 11, 13, and 14.

It may be time to realize that the mainstream educational system is not fully preparing youth for the legacy of world problems and issues that they will receive. It is our responsibility, as adults and program providers, to see and address the educational and skills gaps that are necessary to secure the future for our youth and the sustainability of our planet. The **LeGACY** Wisdom School is one example of how, through creativity, and seeing education as not being contained within textbooks or classroom walls, you can create awareness of the need for sustainability as well as build the skills levels of our youth to be able to address the complexity and criticalness of the current status of our planet and society.



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## Marsha Tongel, Ph.D.

### Bio

Dr. Marsha Tongel is Principal of Tongel Consulting Group, Inc. (TCG), DBA, *Metanoia Consulting*, that assists individuals and organizations to find their grounding and to cope in a consistently shifting environment by creating and supporting: *Leadership that embodies change; Organizational Designs to manifest change; Cultures that embrace change; and Community that supports change.*

*Metanoia Consulting* provides innovative and quality organizational, leadership and change management services, offering tools to help organizations develop the creativity and resilience needed to manage transition and change, to reach their goals faster and with less stress, and to remain sustainable. Transition Management Consultants and Strategic Partners, acting as thought leaders, change agents and coaches focus on using innovative strategies to create leaders who are architects of the future and to support emerging organizational designs. In addition *Metanoia Consulting* stresses the importance of organizational culture and diversity in organizations; focuses on the needs of partnering and collaborating organizations; and brings a unique perspective on women-led organizations, as they often have distinct and differing styles of leadership, organization, tasking and communication.

Dr. Tongel has over 30 years of experience working professionally in the private, public and non-profit sectors. She has a Ph.D. from Union Institute and University in Organizational Development/Organizational Behavior; with a specialty in organizations created and led by women; teaches in the graduate Organizational Leadership program in the School of Business at Point Park University; and is an Adjunct Chair/Faculty Member and Subject Matter Expert for doctoral students from Northcentral University in the graduate School of Business. She has presented at numerous conferences and has published articles in various professional journals and books.

Dr. Tongel is the thought leader behind **LEGACY**...a Wisdom School for Children & Youth. Her organizational and educational background; interest in ancient and indigenous teachings; and concern over how well prepared future generations will be to deal with the complex and multi-system problems that they will be inheriting led her to develop the **LEGACY** program. **LEGACY** is a multi-discipline, multi-generational and multi-ethnic learning program that prepares children and youth in new ways to deal with current and emerging critical issues. The program offers children and youth teachings and tools from various cultures and disciplines to help them evolve into the type of problem solvers, leaders, designers and communicators needed to address the global social, economic and environmental issues they will inherit.

Legacy Wisdom School is a project of Metanoia Consulting-TCG.

For more information on the Legacy Wisdom School and its programs or Metanoia Consulting TCG, contact:

Marsha Tongel, Ph.D. 412 734-1511

[mtongel@aol.com](mailto:mtongel@aol.com)

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