

# SDSN Youth Website Redesign Brief

## Background and Challenge

Objective: Update the website design and structure

The SDSN Youth (SDSN Youth) is not communicating the right info, attracting the right people, nor is it being utilized to its full capacity.

Some key problems we have already identified internally:

- For non-UN or non-SDSN audiences, the website can be hard to read - full of jargon, programs often described very briefly without the detail of impact/problem solved/ or what the 'why' is.
- There are a lot of internal categorisation terms used on the website, making it difficult to navigate.
- What/who we are is not clear: We always get inquiries about funding projects/people. However, we are not in the capacity to do this, as a) we are a program of SDSN b) are not our own legal entity and c) do not fund things
- We have a lack of brand identity

## The website

Right now the website is mostly used for

- The blog
- Announcements
- The first point of information about SDSN Youth

A few things to note about this, blogs are often advertised directly through our social media, announcements are once-off a few times a year, and the information about SDSN Youth isn't so detailed.

SDSN Youth facilitates youth mobilisation towards the SDGs - what that means is that we run programs/events that educate/connect young people to the resources they need, not necessarily facilitating the creation of solutions themselves. These programs all have separate websites (different domain, different branding).

- This leaves little reason for people to come to the SDSN Youth website in the first place

Internally, the website is often seen as an after-thought, as our social media are much more effective channels for reaching and engaging with audience members (program applicants).

The Communications Team begun a website redesign (focusing on content) in 2019, but has yet to be continued.

## Approach

There are three phases to this project

1. An MVP refresh (4-5 weeks)
2. Branding strategy (roughly 1 month)
3. End to end website redesign (TBC)

The MVP refresh will be some high-level UX Research, that we'll base our information architecture on and then do some content uplift.

The Branding strategy phase will be to define and document our brand identity, guidelines so that we can have a consolidated and consistent image across the board.

The end to end website redesign will most likely be a more in-depth UX uplift, updating the design, and then content strategy.

## Scope and timeline

There are 3 phases:

- 1. An MVP refresh (4-5 weeks)**
  - a. Will focus only on sdsnyouth.org
  - b. On the menu structure
  - c. And the copy on the most popular pages
- 2. Branding strategy (roughly 1 month)**
  - a. Brand identity, Brand personality
  - b. Colours, Imagery, Tone of voice
  - c. Guidelines around brand assets, logos, etc.
  - d. Channel strategy (just sdsnyouth.org + blog)
- 3. End to end website redesign (TBC)**
  - a. End to end UX evaluation
    - i. Research on donors
    - ii. Synthesising research we already have on program applicants
    - iii. Mapping out how the website plugs back into our back office processes
  - b. Website design (UX and UI)
    - i. Wireframes - reflecting the new brand
    - ii. Updated info architecture
    - iii. Content uplift
  - c. Content uplift
  - d. Implementation of the new design (Squarespace)
4. [later] Channel strategy (including 4 programs)

- a. What is the communications strategy at SDSN Youth?
  - b. How does the SDSN Youth use its website, social media, and other channels to reach its audience?
  - c. What channels do we have and how are we using them right now?
5. [later] Approach to monitoring and understanding Analytics
  - a. How do we use Analytics to track the success of our channel strategy?

There is a potential for all these three phases to be done in parallel, but it will depend on manpower.

## Assumptions

- We will use the same platform, and will not be switching from Squarespace

## Resources

### Current taskforce

- Communications Team
  - Public Relations, Branding
  - Content
  - Designer - Print, Digital, Interactive
  - Designer - Print, Digital, Interactive
- Team
  - UX/CX Research, Web Dev
  - UX Research, Copywriting, Branding
- - End-to-end digital skills
  - Full-stack Website designer
  - Graphic designer
  - Designer [TBC]

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## Appendix

### What we have now

- Existing material, existing conversations about what we want/are
  - [Comms folder on the website redesign 2019](#)

- Fundraising material
  - [SDSN Youth brochure](#)
- Current narrative
  - Three-step theory of change
    - That SDSN Youth was made with a 3 step theory of change: Educate, Connect, Solutions
    - All programs follow these three steps, and so does SDSN Youth as a whole
    - See appendix
  - Why young people are important in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
    - That young people make up over 50% of the world's population
    - That young people often aren't given access to the right resources, or platform to speak
    - The SDGs are an ambitious set of goals, in which young people are best to help solve them
    - As young people tend to be more ambitious, more creative, more daring than our older counterparts
  - The urgency of the Sustainable Development Goals
    - [That we are entering the 10 years of action](#)
- Current branding guidelines
  - [Colours and text](#)
  - [Style guide](#)
  - [Slides](#)
  - [DOcuments](#)
  - [Existing brand assets \(the wave\)](#) [usage hasn't started]
- Desired positioning
  - Donor/Program applicants: see appendix

## Course grain view of the desired future state

### Personas

- See appendix

### Aspirational websites

- <https://www.sidewalklabs.com/> We liked how 'serious' it looked
- <https://www.aesop.com/> looks professional
- <https://partners.aiesec.org/> communicated value really well
- <https://www.unsdsn-ne.org/> super clean!

### Any constraints

- We have to be careful about the lingo we use about the UN
- We are apolitical organisation

- **Timeline.** We currently only have 1 month to finish the redesign. We desperately need a brand refresh, so we need to cater to this too.

## **Narrative: Three-step theory of change**

Education (awareness) and support for solutions made by young people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The mandate of the Sustainable Development Goals requires urgent and ambitious action. However, the concept of sustainable development is something not taught in most schools, the goals are not well known, yet time is ticking. Our mission is to empower youth globally to create sustainable solutions, and by mobilising the youth (who make up 42% of the world's population) we can create a movement and appetite for change.

What is your unique solution to that problem?:

We have an ecosystem of programs that follow a 3 step theory of change: to educate, connect (collaborate) and support solutions.

We leverage SDSN (our parent organisation), a research network for the SDGs, and our global reach to mobilise young people. The idea being that in order to create solutions, young people need to first have the awareness (education) and networks (collaborate).

We have educational programs across both pre-K to tertiary education.

Our Global Schools Program provides teachers with the resources to teach education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in their classes. We provide them with a forum to connect with other educators around the world, and material to pitch to leadership. We are also piloting a research team to create country specific material.

Our SDG Students Program is a semi virtual, semi physical community that educates and connects tertiary students to take local action towards the SDGs.

We also have programs that focus on supporting solutions.

Our Local Pathways Fellowship is a 12 month Fellowship that trains young people with the necessary knowledge to solve problems in their local cities.

And our Youth Solutions Program, a community of experts, mentors and start ups. A selection go through our accelerator program, and are featured in our annual youth solutions report.

We also have a number of other activities such as our Vatican Youth Symposium and #Knowyourgoals campaign.

What challenges are you facing and how can we help?: Our organisation is predominantly full of volunteers (like 96%). This outreach actually comes on the back of an initiative we are running to improve our website UX for potential donors. I'm looking to understand what information people look to understand when assessing an opportunity to invest. I have seen the website and the 6 areas on the website, but highly appreciate understanding more about the process of making the assessment. Given our volunteering structure it's often quite difficult to find volunteers with specific skills so any help would be highly appreciated. Thank you!

## Desired positioning

### Target audience:

Primary: Potential donors /partners

Secondary: Potential volunteers/staff candidates

### Messaging:

\* Mission-driven, Making an impact for young people to be represented and supported in order to contribute to the SDGs

\* But also professional, serious about our work. A respectful organisation who leads in the Youth x SDG space, with the backing of SDSN and the auspices of the former Secretary-General of the UN

### Positioning goals:

\* Donors: A nonprofit that makes a tangible and measurable impact on an urgent issue - who leads the space with our reach, scale, variety, and strength in our programs.

\* Potential candidates: A place that is rewarding both in personal/professional learning and in social impact. (this is pretty much done so we can focus on the donors

[sdsnyouth.org/join-the-team](https://sdsnyouth.org/join-the-team))

## Personas

### **Volunteer: Student**

Name: George Serrano

Age, gender: 22, Male

Marital status: Single

Location: Urcuquí, Ecuador

Occupation: Student

Hobbies: Rock climbing, Learning about new technologies

SDG familiarity: Learnt about it at school

Motivations in joining: I used to think that the fight of social issues (such as climate change, poverty, lack of quality education, and others) was not having the right support and coverage until I find out about SDSN and the SDGs. That moment, I realized at SDSN Youth has the potential to fight the most critical social issues with the youth potential.

### **Volunteer: Young Professional**

Name: Laura Chin

Age, gender: 26, Female

Marital status: Single

Location: London, United Kingdom

Occupation: Consultant

Hobbies: Enjoys watching movies, and working on side-projects

SDG familiarity: Didn't know very much about the SDGs, but found SDSN Youth when looking for sustainability-related initiatives

**Motivations in joining:** Wanted to use their skills and experiences to contribute to something with social good. Be involved in a greater cause

**Program applicant: Student**

**Name:** Kelly Crawley

**Age, gender:** 20, Female

**Marital status:** Single

**Location:** Melbourne, Australia

**Occupation:** Student

**Hobbies:** I like reading

**SDG familiarity:** I knew a little about the SDGs, but have been familiar with the UNs work for a long time

**Motivations in joining:** I joined SDSN Youth because I wanted to join an international network of talented and dedicated people working towards creating a sustainable future.

**Potential Partner:**

**Name:** UN Youth Assembly: Xan

**Age, gender:** x

**Marital status:** x

**Location:** x

**Occupation:** x

**Hobbies:** x

**SDG familiarity:** x

**Motivations in partnering:** x

**Potential Donor:**

**Name:** x

**Age, gender:** x

**Marital status:** x

**Location:** x

**Occupation:** x

**Hobbies:** x

**SDG familiarity:** x

**Motivations in funding:** x

**Potential Donor: Impact Investor**

**Name:** Rachen Yang

**Age, gender:** 32, Female

**Marital status:** Married

**Location:** Melbourne, Australia

**Occupation:** Director at an investing firm

**Hobbies:** Hiking, Tennis

**SDG familiarity:** Very well, as it is one of the metrics we use to assess impact at our firm

**Motivations in funding:** Our portfolio only includes organisations that show a clear impact:

- Social or environmental good **embedded** into the business model
- A **painful** problem being addressed for the target audience

- A **compelling** solution with a clear value proposition
- A large market **opportunity** to capture
- Proven ability to win **paying customers**
- A **skilled team committed to the mission**

## Lost stories of impact:

I think also in terms of the positioning goals what is important to highlight is the impact of the 4 core programs and Vatican Youth Symposium .. I know they each have their own websites but maybe this is also part of the problem in showcasing their overall impact and reach. When people visit [sdsnyouth.org](https://sdsnyouth.org) it's hard to recognize the work that is consistently flowing out of each program and the impact that has already been accomplished.

For example, take the Vatican Youth Symposium since that has let's say, the least on-going "work" happening regularly. From the website, all you can see is that it is an event, the past programs, participants, the summary I put together last year and the metrics. For donors who are interested in supporting SDG related work/youth programs, we should better highlight the impact of the partnerships that have been created due to this event. Think about how much buzz surrounds SDG 17 and the essence of partnership, pretty much every sector is placing greater focus on this now that we have entered the Decade of Delivery. Nobody cares who attended the event but what actually came out of it.

Take this partnership - Abbey Wemimo and Cara Kennedy-Cuomo. I invited Abbey to the 2018 session where he met Cara (sdsnyouth team), who became an advisor to his organization [Esusu](#). Since then and their work together, in 2020 Esusu has become part of a direct to consumer partnership with [Equifax](#). That wouldn't have happened if Abbey and Cara hadn't met at the VYS (and I am only saying this because Abbey voiced that to me and Sam when we had met with him a few months back, thanking us for inviting him as his participation in that symposium as he said "paved this unbelievable and unforeseen path").

And that is only one example. And it has implications across numerous SDGs, with SDG 17 at its core. Whether donors are interested in education, life on land, healthcare, whatever - they can see that the overall outcome of the VYS aligns with their interests when we better highlight the success that comes after the forum ends.

Same with the 4 programs.. the easier and more accessible we make it to see the impact, (and not just through blogs) the work everyone is carrying out day to day will be more attractive and eye-opening to potential donors. More or less what happens in Workplace is what should be showcased to donors, not just to sdsnyouth members. Like hey, these youth are getting shit done with little to nothing, in Africa with the least technology possible, imagine what they could do if they actually had the proper tools and resources.



## Key stats from the website (the last year):

- 54% of users access via Desktop, 45% via Mobile
- Visits by geography: USA 12%, Nigeria 7.7%, India 7.3%
- Popular content: Join the team 35.8k visits, Home 35k visits, Become a member 16.7k visits, About 10.2k visits
  - \* The join the team page is the only page that has been revamped since 2016

## Survey feedback

[A survey was sent out to SDSN Youth volunteer and SDSN Youth program members. here are some key stats:](#)

- The general impression of the website 74.0
- Items called out that 'could still be improved' -- interactiveness, user-friendly design, up to date information, mobile version
- 70.4% respondents said it was 'Easy enough' to find the information they were looking for, as opposed to 14.8% 'A tad difficult', and 14.8% 'Super easy'
- Visual and aesthetics were rated 3.9/5.0
- Ease of understanding of information 4.0/5.0