

REWORK

YOUTH · ENTREPRENEURSHIP · SUSTAINABILITY

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The 5th Global YES Summit - Rework the World:

Theme and ambition

Rework the World - a response to the converging crises

The 5th Global YES Summit – Rework the World is responding to the confluence of three major global crises: the financial, the social and the ecological. These crises are related, both in their consequences and their causes.

The unemployment impact of the financial collapse is much exacerbating pressures on already weak communities, in the north as well as in the south. The increased tension threatens to tear our societies apart at a time when the need to pull together to meet the long-term challenges of humanity is greater than ever. A globalised world without social cohesion, where a billion youth grow up without avenues for meaningful engagement, is unimaginable. It is an immediate and urgent issue. Such a world will not work.

But in today's integrated world, no simple measures are available to address even immediate concerns. We cannot afford to spend billions on social programmes, just to find that we have restored stability to a world that is inherently unstable and where the logic of value creation is undermining its very foundation: the stability of the natural as well as the social systems.

The sustainability crisis calls for immediate and forceful change that goes to the heart of our economy. At the same time, immediate social concerns call for forceful intervention to restore meaning and dignity to the lives of hundreds of millions of people now being pushed towards the margins of society. In a globalised, integrated society, we can no longer deal with these imperatives in a piecemeal fashion. We must not, therefore, treat the social crises as distinct from the sustainability crises. They both ultimately stem from the logic in our value producing systems, where natural, social

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and human capital are hugely undervalued, and where long-term risks are allowed to build-up exponentially and be pushed onto future generations.

A more inclusive society, fiercely protective of the key life supporting natural systems, must evolve. To be lasting, this change must go to the very heart of our economy and our society. It must go to the heart of how we spend our lives and direct our everyday energy. It must go to the heart of what we call work - not only in the sense of what we do, but also of how we do it, as well as why we do it. Practically, this means that the jobs of tomorrow must be different from those of today, and the organisations and forms of association of tomorrow must build on different values and a different sense of purpose than those of today.

The underlying theme for the 5th Global YES Summit – Rework the World is in this sense the nature of work, and the shift required towards a new kind of employment for the generation to come. But this more fundamental question is addressed against the backdrop of an immediate social and environmental crises.

In here lies also an opportunity. We are in the midst of an inevitable transition. Energy systems must be reconstructed, water sources restored, ecosystems regenerated and cities rebuilt. There is an awful lot of work to be done. Indeed, the whole world must be reworked.

The format: focus on taking emerging initiatives to the next level

The challenges we face are not abstract and the urgency is great. The response must be hands-on and inspirational. It must be capable of mobilising hundreds of millions of people in concrete activities that help us build a better future. We must Rework the World – and we need tangible models as focal points for our engagement.

To set the tone, the 5th Global YES Summit - Rework the World takes its starting point in concrete projects which are presented under five themes: Energy, Water, Land, Cities, People

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The summit presents these, amidst an eruption of music, energy and informality - to create a creative atmosphere of forward looking and constructive engagement. People coming to the summit come with a task - to engage and help take emerging initiatives to the next level.

The projects on display illustrate the emerging new business and organisational models we need for tomorrow - based on new values, organisational designs and uses of technology. They are diverse. But they all illustrate ways to combine the necessity of structurally transforming our economy, with the social imperative of providing opportunities for the younger generation through effective job generation and educational initiatives.

Furthermore, they all have the potential for large scale mobilisation if adequately developed. They could therefore provide avenues for positive and concrete mass engagement. As such they provide tangible examples of the forces that could help us Rework the World.

The aim of the summit is to generate investments and connections that will be taken forward to the final YES summit in 2012 in Alexandria Egypt. The aim by then is to have provided 2 million new constructive, sustainable and meaningful jobs and livelihoods for today's youth.

The wider issues: learning from the specific challenges

Out of the concrete projects, which provide the basis for the summit, more generic issues will emerge. There will be space and time to address these issues and to reflect on what the specific challenges encountered mean in a more general context, to digest the learning and take new perspectives and inspiration back home.

In parallel, to the specific sessions on projects, a separate discussion will be hosted on the policy frameworks we need for the future. The underlying question for this discussion, is the same as for the summit as a whole: how do we take the emerging models of the future, to the next stage where they can help transform business and government.