

AFS Global Ideathon

"AFS Environmental Awareness Website"

The challenge

Spreading awareness about environmental issues to young people around the globe and motivating them to take personal responsibility as global citizens to do small actions in their personal lifestyle for a positive change in order to save, preserve and conserve our planet for future generations. Nowadays environmental issues are just one of the million topics in daily life and not the main focus. But it is important to make an impact and solve it because it is affecting us. In 2015, there were 4.2 million deaths globally because of pollution, according to environmental research organisation Health Effects Institute. India accounts for one in four of these deaths — 1.09 million — where research shows the youth are largely ignorant about environmental issues (A. Banerjee, Hindustan Times, 2017). The Hindustan Times-MaRS Monitoring and Research Systems Youth Survey 2017, reveals that more than 74% of people between the ages of 18 and 25 are not aware of how greenhouse gases cause global warming. Renewable energy is a mystery to 70.9% of the respondents and 63.4% cannot explain why biodegradable waste is important. Gathering information, checking sources (real and alternative facts) is time-consuming and blocks young people from having a quick and easy start into that topic. We need to act fast to save our planet!

Your solution

AFS with its widespread global network that many young people in the world are involved in, it's a perfect platform to spread environmental awareness. With the AFS spirit of being a global citizen, taking responsibility for each other, and making the world a better place in the present and for the future, environmental awareness can be integrated into AFS culture.

Since we are already in the 21st century, everyone in the world is already connected through technology and the internet. So, making a website would mean everyone in the world can freely access it without borders. With that said, our solution will be a webpage partnered by AFS. A website that will be a hub of all the necessary knowledge needed to make young people around the world be environmentally aware and to help them save time researching current environmental issues in hundreds of sites. This website will also provide them all the necessary information and motivate them with personal challenges becoming an environment-friendly individual.

The AFS international website layout template can be used as a base for the Global Environmental Awareness webpage. Important is the use on all desktop and mobile devices. It should be structured modular in matrix structure: Environmental issues sectioned into categories. This allows simple expandability with new content of most interesting sections (website tracking).

Environmental issues (expandable):

- Air, Water- and land pollution
- Extinction of species
- Deforestation and soil degradation
- Climate Change

Category sections:

1. Information Base (facts, figures, infographics, video clips, and further sources)
2. Positive Change Maker Examples of Local, Regional, National, and Global Efforts (Individuals, Companies and Governments) to improve Environmental.
3. Eco Battle of standard and alternative solutions (Car vs. Public Transport)
4. Daily eco-friendly life hacks and tips to a sustainable lifestyle for young people
5. Monthly Environmental Personal Challenges with regional and seasonal focus
6. Global environmental youth forum (database for new webpage content)
7. Sustainability Shop of eco-friendly daily products (used during exchange year)
8. Eco-friendly AFS international cooking recipes
9. (Advanced Development Package: Environment Awareness App)
10. AFS organization and program effort to teach and optimize eco-friendly practices and lifestyle.

Impact

Youth around the globe will become an environment-sensitive individual spreading positive impact on the world throughout their lifetime and they will eventually foster their communities in the future to become eco-friendly. Through this, we can assure that our environment will preserve and will sustain in many years to come.

Sustainability

Since the solution is a website, it is easy to distribute solutions from it around the Globe, because everything will be paperless. In terms of the economical aspect, it doesn't cost that much to create a website and if it does need funding, the website can self-sustain through ads. Since the Internet is accessible to most people, 59% of the world's population to be exact (Statista, Jun 2020), it can reach even the minorities of a community, therefore promotes inclusivity. It will have a much deeper impact in terms of creating a sustainable future using technology to create awareness. And the most important is to keep it in working condition, updating it regularly will be a task, for the long term. And for that, the organization, that is for websites, can also recruit volunteers for keeping the website alive and fresh as long as there is oxygen in the atmosphere.

Scalability

The scale of this solution isn't just limited to AFS alone. Collaborating and partnering with other non-profit organizations that have a mission of improving our world as a better place for future generations, such as environmental organizations, etc. which is ideal. In regards to that, we could make this solution a bigger platform that may reach every person of the world letting them become a part of this change.

Innovation potential

When talking about spreading Environmental Awareness it is usually done personally and in actual activities like campaigns, seminars, and volunteering ideas. These activities are also just limited in local or regional scales, this means that there will be a possibility that other places will just ignore environmental issues because those activities didn't reach them. That's why a website where the main contents promote environmental awareness is a good solution and the website could cater to many youths not just on a national scale but on a global scale.

The AFS angle: Global Competence Development

Global competence is the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others, to give effective and appropriate interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development.

Our page supports global competence because it makes people from different countries share their ideas, and communicate problems and solutions for the betterment of our environment from a global scale.

Social Value

The project will have the objective to share with people from different countries and different ages, so everybody can visit our page, read environment-related content, and participate in some of the virtual activities offered in the website. The purpose is to show that everyone in society will take responsibility for their own environment and be part of a movement that improves the environment of the world.

Implementation

We need the support of the AFS organization to set up the structure for our website and the global network of AFS volunteers to provide "crowd-funded" content. Then our solution is realistically feasible. Starting as a side page of AFS international if successful the side can be expanded into an independent official homepage with several organizations (Youth Organizations, NGOs, and Governments) to participate in Environmental Awareness.

Implementation Steps:

- Setup of web page:
 - Forming a group of interested AFS volunteers
 - Define one AFS mentor that has access to IT support.
 - Kickoff with Scope, Work Package definition and timeframe
 - Structurize modular content and categories and define web layout template
 - Fill webpage with dummy content for first feedback of web page layout structure (review limited to volunteering editors group)
 - Create formulas / templates for each category how volunteers deliver content for environmental awareness (picture size/quality, facts & figures, afs colors, used sources, agreement content usage, text length)
 - Create a database structure where filled formulas can be sent to, reviewed, prioritized by vote, and implemented.
 - Focus of templates is to make content delivery accessible for everybody.
 - First go live with start content
 - Basic Language: English (use of translation tools making it understandable around the Globe.)
 - Application Process for volunteers to join the editing team
- Maintenance

Forming a group of volunteers from every possible AFS country as editors and assistants to maintain the website is the fundamental element of the solution. This group will be responsible for keeping the page updated, organizing online activities monthly, promoting the required changes within the structure of AFS such as changing paperworks to fully online archives, conducting series of events in an eco-friendly frame. This group may be separated into various branches in order to be sure everything is being carried out. Depending on needed resources some categories can update content once a month. Others every 3 month. Project review of the complete Project every 3 month to see effort and effect needed.