

WorldSkills Youth Forum 2008 Report



world **skills**
Youth Forum
Vienna 2008



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WSYF 2008 – FINAL REPORT

Introduction

The WorldSkills Youth Forum 2008 (WSYF), held in Vienna, is the continuation of the Youth Forum 2006 pioneered in Melbourne. This event identifies former competitors as future change agents to voice ideas to improve the future of WorldSkills.

WorldSkills Youth Forum 2008, was held in conjunction with the General Assembly from September 7-11 and involved 34 participants from 19 countries across 23 skill categories. The primary aim of the YF is to create a platform for the exchange of ideas and perspectives about WorldSkills, and to encourage the generation of ideas and recommendations focused on 6 key topics:

- Involving youth
- Information technology
- Competitions
- Branding and media relations
- Organisation
- Environmental issues

This report will outline the suggestions and issues which are categorised in 6 main sections namely:

- Talking `bout revolution
- IT's the future
- Knowledge is power
- Almost Famous
- Connecting the dots
- Lean Green WorldSkills machine

These topics were discussed during the WorldSkills Youth Forum 2008 and were presented to the General Assembly on September 11, 2008.

Youth voice (Alumni/Ambassador)

To provide the champions a way to stay involved in the WorldSkills organisation, we emphasise the need for an Alumni structure. This would involve an addition to the WorldSkills website (www.worldskills.org) that allows the alumni members to stay in touch. Through this alumni, we as past champions can raise topics of interest from a youth's point of view, and discuss issues with other champions from around the globe.

We propose to include a staff member of the WorldSkills Secretariat in the alumni organisation. In doing so, we will have the ability to raise issues to the Executive Board for discussion.

The structure of our alumni is such that it will maintain the flow of information from one generation of champions to the next. All champions from around the globe who wish to commit themselves to WorldSkills are invited to join and become members of the alumni.

Alumni Structure

Our alumni members will, through the WorldSkills Secretariat, be informed about upcoming events. For example, if WorldSkills required volunteer tour guides or a meet-up with sponsors, this information would be posted on the website. This would mean that the alumni member will also be an ambassador for WorldSkills International.

Besides that, it would be helpful if the respective participant of the WSYF becomes an active organiser in their respective country's WorldSkills network. Also, we highly recommend that the Youth Forum delegates

sent by each member country include at least a participant of a preceding WSYF. Doing so would enable the proper flow of information from one forum to another.

We strongly believe that our proposal effectively highlights a self-sustaining body of alumni. Instead of burdening a small group to maintain and run the alumni, we have effectively created a system that will continue to operate in any given situation. On top of that, the prestigious and rewarding nature of becoming a WorldSkills Ambassador, will definitely encourage more alumni to stay connected with WorldSkills.

WS Portal –The next steps

We want to make the WorldSkills Portal better. We feel that it should be user-friendly and it should attract young people, who might become the next champions.

“Young people are the future”

We came up with two ideas to make the Portal better. We would like to create a blog and a youth area or page. We want to make the site more user-friendly, personal and socialising. We would like to create a page for the purpose of exchanging of ideas. It should be open for everyone to keep in touch with one another. This should all be done in a way that attracts young people.

We want to add a frame called: “Blog” and one frame called: “Youth” Blog. The blog is going to be made up like “Facebook” so there are a few sections.

The first one is: **Register**

- Name
- Country
- Skill
- Picture(s)
- E-mail
- Address

All of the previous information will be posted on a public profile. Profile should have a wall to write on, a space for status information and a space for videos.

Second one is: **Log in**

- Sign up for different events
- Post pictures, videos
- Write on walls
- Add friends
- Receive e-mails with updates

Third one is: **Search**

- Skill
- Language
- Names
- Position
- Country
- Competitions

Fourth one is: **Who is who**

- Previous Members
- Everyone registered
- A-Z

Youth area or page

The "Youth" page should be made in a special design for young and everyone interested: like primary school, secondary school, College...

- Games, e.g play your favourite skill
- Put in for example: hand drawings about tools
- Mascot
- Videos
- Live web cam during competition
- Pictures

We hope that the people who are working on the Portal can look at our ideas and make it happen as soon as possible. We think that at least a test page can be done before the end of the year. We expect all of these things to be done before Canada. We think that it can be maintained by the people who are maintaining the Portal.

This page would increase the number of people actively using the WorldSkills Portal. We hope that more people will stay involved in the WorldSkills activities. It will increase the publicity of WorldSkills among young people.

Communication during the Competition

In this group we also discussed communication during the Competition between Team Leaders. In Japan in 2007 Team Leaders were communicating through text messages. We think it would be easier and time saving to use phones with which you can send e-mail, so that the Team Leader doesn't have to select the numbers over and over again.

Knowledge is Power

'Giving the skilled young people an opportunity to gain more knowledge and have the power'

In Japan 2007, competitors could sign in to Competitor Centre where they could find documentation for their skill. We felt that there is a need to take it one step further. At the moment competitors are very country focused, where experts are skill focused.

Our idea is simply to improve the already existing Competitor Centre. We want to add a forum for each skill category to make it easy to get to know your fellow competitors. A place where competitors can ask questions about for example test projects, competition rules or which tools are acceptable. This place would be a centre point for all the conversation about the skill among the past and present competitors and the current Chief Expert.

This would also serve as a place to exchange pictures and video clips after the Competition, so that the next competitors can see them before their competition. We want to give everybody an equal chance to know, see and understand each other more.

The Competitor Centre should be built like this:

This will be useful especially for those competitors who come from a country that has not participated in that skill before. New competitors will have a chance to ask questions from a past Champion from any country and straight from the Chief Expert. This will also act as an icebreaker before the Competition. This can be easily created and maintained. We hope it will be done before Canada and it can be used from there on.

Visitor site experience

Information Center

The competition needs to attract the media on many levels which would therefore engage the public visitors. WorldSkills needs to provide more information to the on-site visitors and the most effective way of doing so, is to answer many of the public's questions as soon as they enter the WorldSkills Competition site.

We would suggest that there be an *'Information Centre'* at the entrance of the Competition site. This will inform the visitors and media of what is happening, who (the skill) it involves, where and when it is taking place and why they should be there to see it.

There are many ways in which this can be achieved, mostly through visual communication. The Information Center should display a large screen promoting *'Daily Highlights'* to capture the attention of the visitors. These daily highlights would also be sent to the media the prior to the Competition. This will encourage them to attend the event at those particular times to capture the excitement.

We will also have other screens of live footage from different skills and where they are located. Each skill would be easily located with navigation maps readily available at the Information Centre. To avoid chaos in the Information Centre, there would be a number of friendly, knowledgeable tour guides to provide any further information to the visitors.

Finally, it will be very effective if there were interactive (touch) screens available at the Information Centre. This would enable the visitors to easily access information on their own country's competitors, the current standings and where they can be located.

Speed tasks

In order to bring more excitement to the Competition, there needs to be more action in as many of the visual skills as possible.

An effective way of creating such excitement is to incorporate a speed task and promote it well, both to the media and the public. We are only now aware that this exists in some skills, however it is not advertised to the media and public and we believe better promotion is needed. This then relates back to the Information Centre and how things can be promoted and the public be made aware of what is happening at the Competition site.

We understand that some skills have one project, and others have many tasks throughout the days of the Competition. Our idea is to base a small percentage of the project/task on time and speed. It creates a rush of excitement for the public and media, as it challenges the competitors on another level.

Having had the experience of competing on an international level of WorldSkills, we are all aware of the chaotic atmosphere outside the Competition area. Visitors are asking one another and even themselves "who is that Competitor?" and "what are they doing/ what do they have to make?" It is unfortunate that the visitors and media don't have a clear understanding of who the Competitor is and what they are actually watching.

Competitor profiles on site

The solution to this problem can be solved by the means of both visual and verbal communication. Visual information about the Competitor can be displayed at their work station eg. Name, country, profile image etc. Verbal information will involve having a past Champion available at each skill's site, to provide exact information about the skills, tasks and what is expected and also share their experience and knowledge on a more personal level.

Our final objective relates back to our topic question: *"How can we make WorldSkills sexy?"*

This should be a priority for WorldSkills, as we are trying to appeal to a variety of audiences; the youth, media, sponsors, and the general public.

A fantastic way of achieving this goal is to collaborate as many skills as possible and showcase the skills and completed products in a creative and impressive way. Our idea is to present and promote the products on a stage/ catwalk runway. We can display an exciting *'skills parade'* with a well-respected host and high profile DJ, creating exciting sounds to attract the public. This event would involve many of the Client Services skills

such as Floristry, Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy, Ladies Dressmaking etc. Another example would involve the more technical skills, such as Mobile Robotics and Mechatronics, show casing their final products in action. This could also involve many other skills on different levels as the opportunities are endless.

These suggestions and ideas are quite easily achievable within the near future and can be further developed to enhance the WorldSkills profile.

Consistent competitions and branding

Situation now

The national competitions are all very different in all the countries around the world. In most of the countries, there are no national competitions, but all the different skills have their own competition. This has following disadvantages:

- The national competition is not very attractive for visitors, media and sponsors.
- Therefore, the WorldSkills Competition is not getting the attention it deserves while it is being held.
- Competitors go through a different procedure until they participate in WorldSkills.
- Therefore, they probably will not have the same experience when they finally compete in the Competition.
- Countries cannot really use information on how a competition is to be set up, because they are all different.
- It is not possible to define a global timing telling when all the different competitions are being held.
- The different countries are not using the same logo for their national competitions.

Improvements to be done

We suggest that every national competition would be set up similar to the WorldSkills Competition. This means that all the skill competitions should be held at the same place at the same time. In other words, we recommend defining a standard for all national competitions.

The WorldSkills logo, must be better promoted by every nation. To define the required standards, we recommend using guidelines for Competitors, Experts and national competitions. To train competitors and test them, projects and tasks are used. All this information should be stored in a database on the Internet and every nation should have access to it.

The following things should be done:

- Set up the national competition similar to WorldSkills
A big challenge will be raising the money and bringing certain skills like CNC machinery to the competitions site. Competitions of certain skills could be held somewhere else and could be shown live on screens on the actual competition site. Organizing one big national competition for all skills is a big challenge but we are sure that it will be a great investment for the future. This is working well in Norway, France, Finland and South Tyrol for example
- Define the guidelines for competitors, experts and national competitions.
- Encourage nations to use the same logo - WorldSkills has to become a trademark!
- Provide easy maintainable space in the web to exchange guidelines and for example test projects.

Benefits

If the national competitions are more attractive, WorldSkills will be too:

- Promotion is easier because there is only one national competition to promote.
- Promoting the national competitions will automatically promote WorldSkills itself.
- Media is more interested because the bigger national competition is more exciting.
- More sponsors will be attracted because the platform for promotion is bigger.

- The competitors will have a more similar experience because the national competitions are all similar to WorldSkills (professional skill and environment of the competition).
- Competitors will have the possibility to go to their neighbouring countries and see their national competitions.
- Competitors will already meet each other during the national competitions. Also, family and friends of the competitors will get a national feeling which will take them to WorldSkills finally.

Go green

Introduction

When it comes to anything related to the word “green”, most of the people relate it to the present and maybe to the next 5 years! However when we talk about “green”, we should be thinking about the far future and the problems that will arise if we do not take action now. Also considering that we are the youth who are going to build the future this is an important issue to us! That is what a green WorldSkills Competition should stand for to inspire the world!

Objectives

Our goal is to make WorldSkills greener already before Calgary 2009. We want to use our position as role models to make the competitors, spectators and everyone else involved in the Competition aware of the existing environmental issues.

Existing problems

- We are not adequately utilizing all the resources, materials and products that the competitors have and manufacture.
- There is inadequate awareness of the existing issues in the skills and lack of responsibility to our environment.
- People may not be aware of the existing environmentally friendly methods adopted in the Competition. At the present stage, there is not really anything that motivates the competitors to use greener methods in their skills and especially during the Competition.
- The mandatory costs of adopting and maintaining environmental friendly strategies are too high. The competitions are not held in places that would benefit more from the Competition than developed countries!

Solutions & benefits

Hence we came up with solutions and have divided them into three concepts that solve the existing problems from different angles, creating a holistic approach. They are :

- Green concept
- Cost concept
- 3rd World Country concept

These three concepts are again elaborated below and we are going to describe each of them separately.

Green concept

- Green Award
- Green tips
- Tree planting

The idea of the green concept is to make the general public more aware of the existing environmental friendly methods adopted. In order to do so, we have come up with three strategies that could help in this aspect while involve the Competitors, Experts and spectators.

Our first strategy is to introduce a ‘*green award*’ in addition to the three existing medals, gold, silver and bronze, in each skill for the competitors. This “Green medal” will be given to the competitors who consider and implement environmentally friendly methods the best in their skill. The guidelines for choosing this winner will be skill-specific and should be decided by the experts from the respective skills. This would also be an additional source of motivation for the competitors.

As an example, the amount of waste that a Competitor produces during the Competition would have an implication on the marks.

The second strategy is to introduce “Green tips” at the Competition sites! Contrary to the “Green medal” being a motivation for the competitors, these “Green tips” should inform the spectators about the environmentally friendly methods that are used or can be used in the specific skills. These “Green tips” should be displayed next to the competition areas explaining innovative methods for the skill.

The third strategy is to “leave a footprint” at every location where the Competition has taken place! - “This will make WorldSkills grow!” In addition to the opening and closing ceremony, there should be this new “Tree-planting” ceremony, introduced to leave a green sustainable symbol behind. Every skill should plant its own tree and this could as well be a good “ice-breaker” before the actual competition starts. This means that competitors from one skill, as a team-building-project, will plant a sapling together to symbolize the first step of building a greener future together!

Cost concept

- Auctions
- Shops

The idea of the cost concept is to compensate some of the expenses incurred from the competition by selling products and services of the competitors.

On one hand, the products, tools and equipment could be reused so that they do not just end up in the bin after the competition. In addition there would be a motivating side effect to produce even higher quality standard products during the competition.

On the other hand, after the four competition days, the competitors could offer their talents on a charity-day.

As an example, hairdressers could provide haircutting services in exchange for funding.

3rd World concept

- Making products useful
- Teaching and educating the local people
- Build sites in developing countries

The idea of the 3rd World concept is more of a step by step basis and might seem abstract at the first glance. However, this should give an idea of the direction WorldSkills should become in the future.

The first step is to make the end products more useful by donating them to people that can need them. Even more, the future goal should be to assemble different products from the skills into something more useful. As an example: assembling a windmill that drives an integrated water pump. As an additional example, in the skill printing, they could print maps and educational materials for schools in developing countries.

The second step would be to send a team of former competitors to a local site where professional help is needed. Not only will this deliver direct help, education is also passed on to the locals. An example would be to build a small medical center or school. Such projects would also play an important part of raising the publicity of WorldSkills as an organisation.

The third step is to host the future competitions in developing countries. The facilities could then be donated to the country after the Competition in order for them to use them.

These developing areas would not only benefit from the buildings but would also create job opportunities for local people when building the competition sites. This would also have positive effects on the local economy!

Green Conclusion

In summary, this presents an entire “Green” package for WorldSkills. Starting with the competitors and the experts who will be driven to an environmental friendlier way of working due to addition of the “Green



Award”, the spectators will also be made aware of the important role that the environment plays for WorldSkills. By making products more useful and giving them to people in need, this would also help in branding WorldSkills as environmentally friendly!

Summary

Some of the topics have been raised already by the last Youth Forum 2006. Some of those have been working well and we just want to take it one step further. Some have not been acted on so we are raising it again; to show that it is really needs to be done.

Name	Country	Skill Category	Year of competing	e-mail address	Phone number
Holly Browne	Australia	Beauty Therapy	2007	holly.browne@hotmail.com	
Courtney Barton	Australia	Floristry	2007	court_barton@yahoo.com.au	+4179233493
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Cornelia Imser	Austria	Beauty Therapy	2005	cornelia.imser@xlink.at	+436508303150
Bernhard Mühlburger	Austria	Mech. Eng. CADD	2005	mueb@gmx.at	+41 76 242 44 28
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