



## **The World Leadership Day Story**

### **A snapshot of its journey and its mark on the world**

**W**orld Leadership Day (WLD) had a colorful life from its inception. It was founded and launched by Elisabeth Gortschacher of E.E.G. Coaching Pty Ltd on March 20, 2007 in Sydney Australia with twenty (20) people by personal invitation. WLD grew rapidly from its launch in 2007 to a presence in six (6) countries in 2008 and twenty (20) in early 2009 before taking a plunge to six (6) resulting from the impact of the financial crises. And now October 2013 WLD is back to a presence in nineteen (19) countries. All the way along WLD had to run before it learnt to walk as it expanded rapidly.

**T**here were times when WLD took one step forward and three steps back yet it stayed its course. The founder's deep commitment to challenge the way we think about leadership and develop leaders for the new world, her focus on sustainability, intuitive decision making and freedom from bureaucracy, together with the passion of WLD Ambassadors brought about WLD's own transformation.

**W**ith the launch of its evolved vision in December 2012 - "Youth are the leading force in co-creating a new era for humanity where equality and abundance are the natural results of collaboration, synergy, integrity and honoring of all life in the living universe" - WLD became a platform for grassroots evolutionary and entrepreneurial leadership development in addition to celebrating World Leadership Day as an annual, growing, international event to inspire, connect and transform leadership thinking and development across generations, gender and cultures.

**T**he catalyst for WLD's initial rapid expansion was its free yearly WLD publications. Released shortly after the inaugural WLD event, it spread like wildfire across the world – viral marketing at its best. Some people reported having received the WLD publications from three different countries within one day and being urged to participate in this great leadership initiative.

**P**eople were inspired by WLD's vision "A world that recognizes, engages and cultivates the innate leader in every person" and with its inherent belief that everyone is innately a soul-inspired leader. A soul-inspired leader is a person whose actions, choices and words align with their soul's purpose. People from all walks of life could relate to, and embrace this new definition of leader that highlights that every individual is on this planet for a purpose to make their contribution through the expression of their unique gifts, passions and talents.

**T**his was a radical different view of leadership then prevalent at the time where a leader was viewed as someone who runs a big organization – business leader, church leader or politician. This sentiment was clearly expressed by a participant at the 2008 World Leadership Day Celebration in Singapore, hosted by WLD Ambassadors Denise Wright and Joanna Brill.



2008 WLD Celebration – Singapore  
"Inspire the Youth of the World"

*"I know plenty about leaders (or so I would like to think). I watch them on the news and learn about their backgrounds from books and documentaries. Captains of industry, military heroes and sports superstars — sometimes, it is hard to escape the feeling that leadership is something that happens to other people. But not to an ordinary bloke like me. That is why I immediately liked the idea of a World Leadership Day. Started in Australia just a year ago, it aims to set a vision for today, a challenge for us to think about what we want to achieve through authentic leadership. To create some ripples that would could affect the rest of the world."*

**O**rganizations and Schools from different parts of the World where equally inspired by the WLD initiative and contacted us for guidelines to celebrate WLD and acknowledge their employees and students as part of the celebration.

**O**ur WLD Ambassadors are the critical and energetic force behind the success in realizing our WLD vision and mission. For WLD to grow and evolve to what WLD stands for today would not have been possible without the spirit and passion of WLD Ambassadors. When WLD Ambassadors join they are encouraged to

- Make World Leadership Day, and all that it entails, the best it can be for them and it will be the best for the world
- Always stay true to themselves and hold the World Leadership Day vision lightly
- Spread the vision and message of World Leadership Day in any way they can and play to their strengths
- Model authentic leadership and a high level of integrity wherever they are, and in whatever they do, and being conscious of World Leadership Day's vision

- Respect the WLD guidelines designed to provide clarity, focus and direction to facilitate a positive environment, effective communication, allowing WLD to operate free of bureaucracy and honoring everyone's energy and time.
- Honor openness, integrity and timely communication

**T**here are no written agreements or contracts for World Leadership Day Ambassadors to sign, making it easy for Ambassadors to join and exit. There is, however, an expectation that World Leadership Day Ambassadors work together as a team and contribute to our collective growth and active voice in the world. Some Ambassadors have been with WLD since 2008; others stay a short time and move on for all the reasons experienced in organizations. We had babies born, life-threatening illness, illness of spouse, loss of job, new demanding career, having to take care of business and business demand requiring their full attention. Each Ambassador irrespectively of how long they stayed left their mark and contributed to where WLD is today.

**W**L D Ambassadors join the WLD Ambassadors Team through

- Personal Invitation
- Recommendation by WLD Ambassadors
- Self-nomination

At contact they go through a two step process

1. They receive the WLD Ambassador Information Kit and are asked to respond to a set of questions and submit their Personal and Professional Profile (CV Style)
2. They are invited to connect with the founder and the first Ambassador if there is already an Ambassador for that country, to get to know each other and ask/answer any specific questions.

If OK they are welcomed to the WLD Ambassador Team



**2008 Inaugural WLD Celebration  
South Africa**

*“If there is truth in the saying that the success of an event can be measured by how long the people stayed and networked afterwards, South Africa’s first World Leadership Day was a roaring success.” Gerda Venter, WLD Ambassador South Africa*

**T**he inaugural WLD Celebrations in Germany brought to light some major cultural ‘hot buttons’ around the word “leadership” as Elizabeth Kruempelmann, WLD Ambassador to Germany wrote *“I received feedback that leadership is a sensitive topic because it is too often associated with Germany’s World War II past and the negative leadership that was in power then. One must tread lightly when speaking of developing leaders.”*

**I**n organizing the 2008 inaugural World Leadership Day Celebration in France, WLD Ambassador Pascale Demont was able to see how “leadership” was still taboo in France. In spite that the WLD Celebration was an enriching experience.

*“Our decision initially was to allow participants to experiment and feel their leadership. The result exceeded what we had hoped for: discussions (“respecting youth” or “how to inspire the youth to more citizenship”) found their way next to various workshops (“Leadership and Horses”, “Discovering your inner voice”, “leadership constellation”) and all the participants walked away richer than they had arrived.”*



**Wilmer Gonzalez**

**T**errill Welsh, Ambassador to Canada, taking a different approach to celebrating the inaugural WLD, partnered with the prestige Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific. Mr. Gonzalez, a nineteen year old student of the college, from Nicaragua, directed and produced a documentary video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntjCiVQzS5U>) to celebrate World Leadership Day - Canada. The video was viewed over six hundred times in the first six weeks it was posted and received national attention when Mr. Gonzalez was interviewed by CBC public radio on World Leadership Day.

**I**n early 2009, WLD was described as *“the by far most professional global leadership event”* by the CEO of SGMI Inhouse, the subsidiary of SGMI Management Institut St. Gallen, Switzerland, who joined the WLD Ambassador Team as WLD Ambassador to Switzerland.

**W**LD Ambassador to Barbados, Sherrilene Collymore presented the vision, mission and values of WLD to two diverse groups of entrepreneurship enthusiasts and practitioners from around the world at the 2009 World Entrepreneurship Summit and Society in London. Having heard of WLD for the first time *“they were very intrigued with this progressive concept and imitative.”*



**Sherrilene Collymore with international colleagues from the UK and Pakistan at the World Entrepreneurship Summit in London**

**P**assionate about encouraging authentic and visionary leadership within schools, the Ambassadors for World Leadership Day Singapore focused on partnering with educators to celebrate WLD 2009. They created two events, one for the Canadian International School, a diverse and vibrant school and a second with the Ministry of Education, focusing on a group of Innovation Leaders from a range of different Singapore schools.



**World Leadership Day Singapore  
Canadian International School**

**K**icking off with sixty students from the Canadian International School, our key message was that not only are they leaders of tomorrow but they are leaders of today. *The possibilities that they were already innate leaders, contributing in different ways, came with a bit of disbelief and there was definitely some initial skepticism in the room.*

**A**s a result of the conversations that we created with the group, there was soon the realization that leadership doesn't have to be tied to government or business power. *By uncovering their own passions and connecting with what they care about in the world they realized that they had a role to play now in bringing their own unique contribution to their communities and beyond.*

**D**elighted with their first WLD Singapore 2009 event, The Ambassadors for WLD Singapore arrived at Junyuan Secondary School to embark on a different World Leadership Day experience with a group of educators (comprising MOE HQ, regional and local level school leaders & teachers), all with a passion for bringing innovation to schools throughout Singapore.



**World Leadership Day Singapore  
Innochamps, Ministry of Education**

*Our vision for the Ministry of Education Singapore WLD was to create connection for each individual to their own innate leadership, to one another and to the potential of what can happen through leadership for education, for Singapore, for the world.* Inspiring each other and themselves we wanted to create some ripples of shared passion, purpose and inspired action towards future collaboration and a community of practice

**G**oing back on memory lane



**Inaugural World  
Leadership Day 2007  
Sydney Australia**

### **H**ighlights

- Hearing about the many positive developments in leadership that never make it into the media
- Experiencing the pride and gratitude of everyone about being part of the inaugural World Leadership Day event and the emerging World Leadership Day vision.
- The synchronicities of the Speakers. Each speaker's topic and focus built on the previous one (without conscious coordination of the sequence) and left us with contrasting and inspiring insights and perspectives

**O**n 19th March 2009, Qatar celebrated its inaugural World Leadership Day event. The event was not only the first WLD event hosted in Qatar but also the first WLD event in the Middle East. The event was formally opened by an MC, a female Qatari student who was a member of the Qatar Debate Center (QD), who later took part in a live debate in front of the audience.

**T**he Executive Director of QD, Dr Maarafi, the driving force behind the event planning of Qatar's first World Leadership Day event, spoke enthusiastically about leadership and QD's passion for igniting leadership qualities in students.



**World Leadership Day Welcome Address  
by Layla Saad, WLD Ambassador Qatar**

**Q**atar's WLD Ambassador, Layla Saad formally introduced WLD to the audience. As it was the first time that most of the audience had heard of WLD, Layla took some time to tell the story of the background of WLD from its inception in 2007 to its global growth in 2009 and beyond.

**L**ayla also spoke of the importance of authentic personal leadership, in the context of today's ever-changing global world. In particular, Layla upheld WLD's message of the importance of leadership regardless of age, race, creed and position in society

**S**heikh Saud Bin Abdul Rahman, known locally as an inspirational role model to youth and adults alike, Sheikh Saud gave an enlightening, entertaining and truly insightful keynote speech on the importance of leadership.



**Keynote Address by Sheikh Bin Abdul Rahman,  
Secretary General of the Qatar Olympic  
Committee**

**S**heikh Saud truly inspired the students at the event to develop some important leadership habits within themselves, and encouraged adult leaders to reassess their current habits and qualities to ensure that they were being the best leaders they could be.

**W**LD Qatar was fully sponsored by the (QD), a member of the Qatar Foundation, which is dedicated to developing and supporting the standard of open discussion debate amongst students and young people in Qatar and the Arab region. The event was thus a collaboration of adults and students alike, who came together in this cross-generational event to celebrate and support the message of WLD

**W**LD's credibility is evident from the caliber of WLD Ambassadors it attracts and who they engage in the World Leadership Day celebrations around the world. Ambassadors are influential leaders in their own right and passionate about leadership. They are engaged in leadership development and entrepreneurialism at university level, their own Leadership Association, Institute, or are establishing Leadership Schools or Leadership Academies. Several

are engaged as international consultant in business and entrepreneurship. Many hold PhDs, MBA's, Educational Degrees and are published authors, multiple business and entrepreneurial award recipients. WLD has a growing team of Young WLD Ambassadors to be at the forefront of World Leadership Day initiatives to realize the vision and mission of WLD. They represent Australia, Canada, The Netherlands, Russia, Uganda, Malawi, and Ghana.

**WLD** made its impact in changing mindsets about leader and leadership across the globe. When first introduced that everyone is innately a leader, the founder was laughed at and ridiculed. Now people say “the problem is that many people don't see themselves as leaders.’ About three years ago the UN expressed concerns about young people becoming the lost generation. These concerns were picked up by the media and within a short time the message “Young people are the lost generation” appeared in writings from different parts of the world. Young people were criticized for the qualities that will actually make them the generation that will transform our world. They don't buy into traditional norms, and they challenge the status quo. This makes life uncomfortable for people who want to maintain traditional and outdated ways of operating. The young people want a fulfilling life and meaningful work. They want to create a better world and demonstrate courage to step out to lead in areas of their passion.

**In** 2012, WLD stepped up and took a stand for young people to put a stop to this negative and destructive labeling of young people. It started with the launch of the WLD's young leaders (<12) and youth leaders (>12) awards by Mayor Anne Jones at the 2012 March WLD celebration in Wellington, Australia. This award acknowledges the leadership qualities young people demonstrate in their everyday life, in schools and communities and volunteering. It created a shift from looking what is wrong with young people and opening their eyes to their gifts passion and leadership qualities, with positive impact on whole communities.

**In** December 2012, WLD launched its evolved vision seeing Youth as the leading force in co-creating a new era for humanity...that was celebrated at the 2013 WLD Event together with its 7<sup>th</sup> birthday. Part of WLD's mission is to build a strong team of 50 Young WLD Ambassadors by end of 2015 and to create the platform for them to lead in areas of their passion. Our Russian Ambassador, Yana Tarasova saw a need to have a platform for young people to communicate across the globe, so we launched the free monthly Global Conversation in May that for the first 6-month was hosted by Yana and the founder of WLD. Now we are transitioning the hosting to young Ambassadors with Yana at the helm.

**WLD** is a platform for change and transformation – for the voice and dreams for young people. Real transformation happens from the inside out and that is what WLD focuses on an increasingly larger scale.

**WLD's** focus on young people has been well received, and inspired young people and people passionate about developing leadership in young people to become WLD Ambassadors. It was the spark that ignited the African continent and led Mfon Archibong to join WLD as Ambassador to Nigeria, embracing WLD's vision as a vision for Africa and initiating the planning of the first 3-day WLD Conference – 20 to 22 March 2014 – with an estimated 2000-2500 young people attending.

**A** major focus of the conference will be to inspire young people to connect with their innate leader, passion and inner wisdom, and to start planning for the emerging future of a new Africa. The space will be created for young Africans to lead this process and collaborate amongst them. This will demonstrate that we trust and believe in them to know what future they want to create not only for Africa but for the interconnected world.

**T**he Conference will provide an opportunity for WLD Ambassadors attending, to meet for the first time in person and work together as contributors to the conference. Outside the conference activities, Ambassadors will identify and formalize a new WLD operational and governing structure for its global platform for youth leadership development and the specific needs for the African WLD initiative.

**T**he intention for the conference is to create a space and atmosphere where young people are fully engaged, and walk away with hope, confidence in themselves, their country and future; knowing they have a purpose in the world, and the world needs what they have to offer. They will gain insights into their strengths, talents and an awareness of areas they need to work on that will inspire them to learn and grow. The experiential activities will give them an experience of the joyful and challenging facets of leadership and the energy that is released when connecting with what is important. Along the way they will learn and/or enhance a range of soft skills essential for leading in a virtual environment and interconnected world. They will have made friends and connections for life.

### **World Leadership Day 2013 – Wellington, Australia**

WLD proudly acknowledged the leadership qualities of thirteen inspiring young leaders with the WLD Young Leaders Awards. Former Mayor Anne Jones was honored with the WLD Dedicated and Generous Community Leader Award for her commitment to the vision and mission of WLD. Her support, dedication and generosity of spirit contributed greatly to where WLD is today - honoring the leadership qualities in our young people – our leaders of today and tomorrow.



**Inspiring young leaders with the former Mayor Anne Jones, a passionate supporter of World Leadership Day**

**W**LD honored Farren Hotham, Editor of Wellington Times, as Light-Hearted and Generous Community Leader, who actively supported WLD from the time he joined the Wellington Community in 2010. Mark Williams joining the global team of Young WLD Ambassadors emerged out of Farren’s invitation to feature young leaders in our community. Mark was the first young leader interviewed by the founder of WLD.



**2013 WLD Youth Award**



**Celebrating World Leadership Day's 7th Birthday**

**T**o date World Leadership Day had a presence in 28 countries.

**Longest presence:** 3-6 years

Australia, Singapore, France, Canada, USA, Barbados, South Africa, The Netherlands, Pakistan, Scotland, Virgin & Cayman Islands, Ethiopia

**Brief Presence:** 1-2 years

Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Ireland, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Sweden, Qatar, Israel

**Recent Presence:** 1 year or less

Uganda, Nigeria, Malawi, Ghana, Jamaica, UK

Out of the five African WLD Ambassadors who recently joined WLD - four came highly recommended by two of our WLD Ambassadors and one joint through personal initiative. All went through the two step joining process. The final decision is based on intuition. Given WLD is free of bureaucracy it is easy for Ambassadors to join and exit.

### **The Way Forward**

**T**he WLD-African Initiative is in its initial discussion stage. The 2014 WLD Conference in Calabar, Nigeria will be the beginning of the transformation of Africa. It is aimed to ignite, activate and mobilize the leadership potential of young Africans through a range of experiential activities that bring out their strengths and gifts and develop and strengthen leadership and entrepreneurial skills and attributes. It will be the place to strategize and develop a draft plan for the next five years – in allowing young people to take the lead in the planning, we will demonstrate that we indeed create a space for their innate leadership to be expressed and flourish. It is all about congruency between our words, choice and actions.