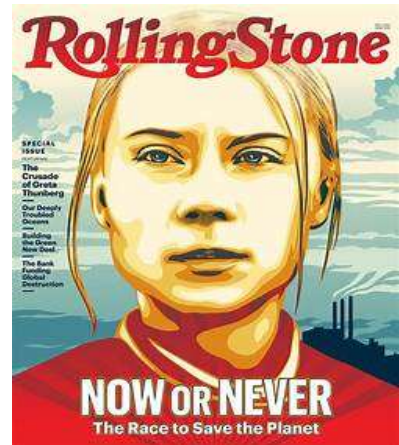




Youth-led People Power

Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who inspires action to tackle climate change, has become more recognisable than most presidents. She has the clarity of mind to see our endangered world as if through the eyes of a clear-thinking alien, uncluttered by economics, or ego, birthplace or age. Greta represents youth, a section of our population often forgotten, but one which - in the absence of any other front-runner - has the potential to lead us all towards more sensible policies for a sustainable future.



And Greta inspires me ... incredibly so! For 30 years I have been involved in the same space that she now commands: leading youth to tackle climate change. But this young lady's achievements have reached uncharted levels, far surpassing anything that has gone before.

Nevertheless I can also recall some wonderful initiatives which showed me - long before Greta - the ability of youth to take the baton and run with it, much faster than I ever could (both literally and metaphorically). For example:

- In Australia, I recall a a postcard campaign run by a class of 10-year-olds, to alert schools along the length of the magnificent River Murray, that their waterway was being degraded by waste. Their valiant efforts led to meetings with industry heads and town councillors. 10-year-olds! That was impressive.

- A decade or so later, in Mumbai, I watched as trainee teacher Sugana, led her class to develop gardens on the roof of their high-rise school building. Impossible, they said, to grow masses of vegetables and fruits in such a congested city. Problem solved by outside-the-box young minds.

- More recently it was Tracey, a 12-year-old from Isinya Primary in Kenya, who captivated the minds of 10,000 school heads, when she spoke at their annual conference on climate change. She was from Kajiado, an area at the time decimated by drought. She was inspired to talk!



What Greta and all these young people above are doing, is throwing a lifeline to world leaders, from the island of youth. They're really saying:

"Listen to us: the caretakers of Planet Earth after you leave the room. There is a better way forward than the track you have been following. Please stand aside and let us show you the more appropriate path."

So yes, the good news is that Greta Thunberg is an amazing inspiration to her peers. The even better news is that there are many more like her, in every state of every country around the globe, and when they all become motivated and mobilized together, that has the potential to become an unstoppable force.

Which of course is exactly what our planet needs right now: an irresistible force that can overturn out-of-date and simply wrong thinking, which has been based, since WW2, on the false premise that a market-led economy is *God of All Things*. Eventually leaders will be forced to come to terms with the fact that our economy depends on our environment.

And what if there's no environment?

"Well," (as any alien landing on planet Earth might say): "*Can they really be that stupid?!*"

duncangregory@whittlingourniche.com



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