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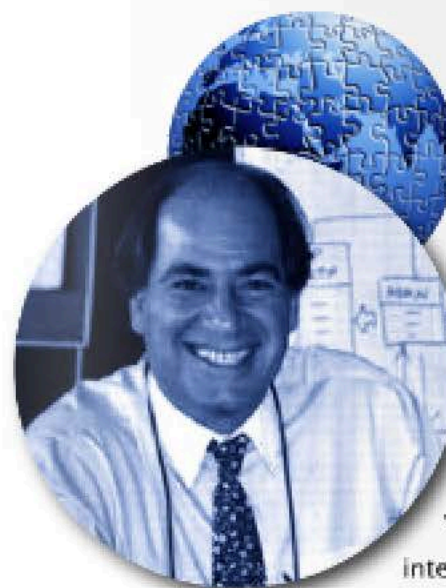
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The Global Sustainability Fellows Program:

# The Future of Sustainability Education



By: Michael Ben-Eli, PhD,  
The Sustainability Laboratory

The Sustainability Laboratory is launching a special graduate-level program—The Global Sustainability Fellows program integrating a rigorous theoretical orientation with experience-based learning and international and cross-discipline exposure.

The underlying intention is to fill a persistent educational gap by delivering an intensive, graduate-level learning experience, offering a more rigorous approach to the issues of sustainability than is commonly available. The program's central goal is to better prepare future generations of leaders in all sectors, including government, business and civil society, for tackling the challenges of a worldwide transition to an enduring, sustainable state. Through the program, students will acquire the essential set of core competencies required for the task.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The program will be conducted in collaboration with a group of select research and educational institutions from around the world, representing different disciplines:

**Architecture and Urban Planning;**

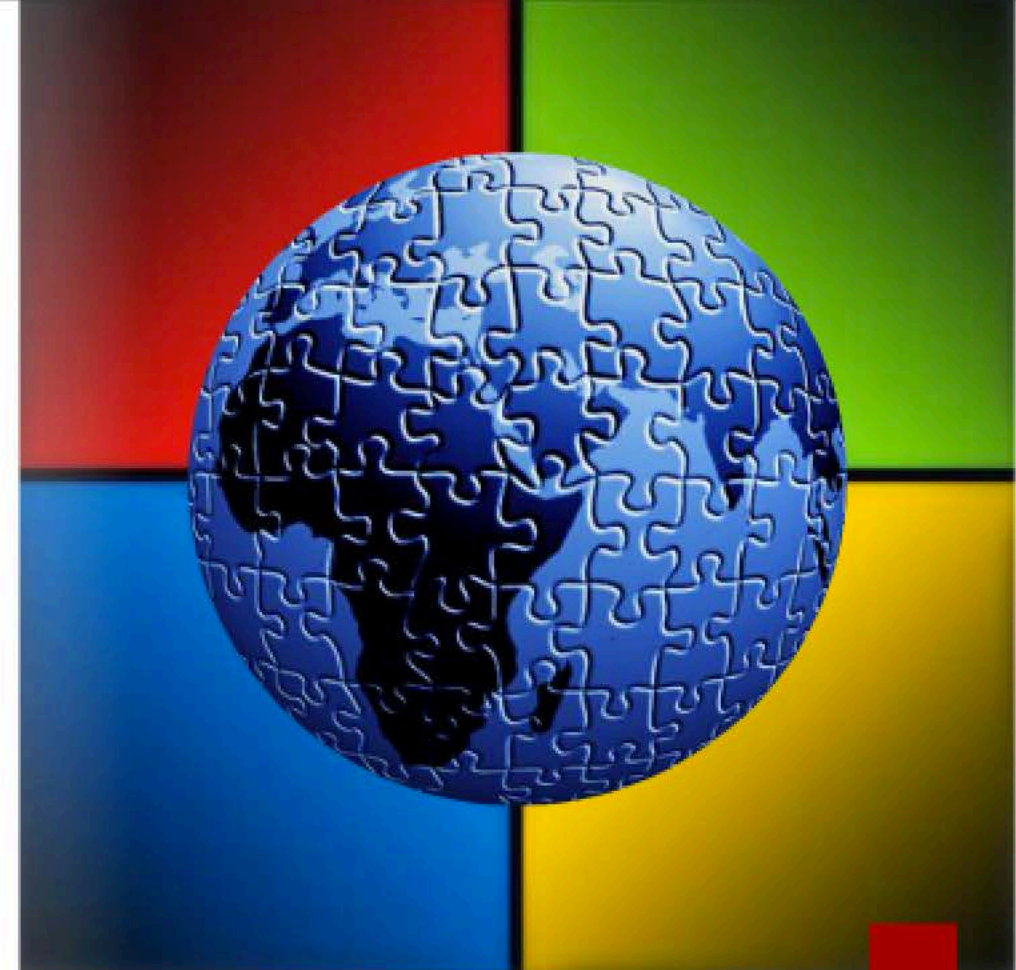
**Engineering; Business and Management;**

**Law; Art; Design; Health; and more.**

**Twelve such institutions are already on board<sup>1</sup>.** Each institution will conduct its own academic program and grant its own master's degree, but students from participating institutions who wish to acquire an additional set of essential sustainability competencies will spend time with The Lab during their respective two-year graduate programs. The intent is for Lab sessions to be conducted on a rotational basis, each year on the campus of a different participating school.

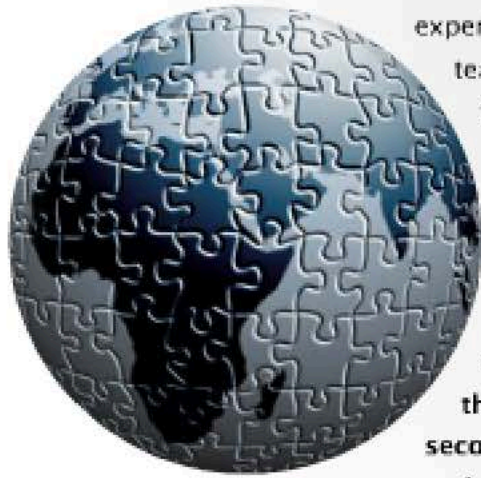
**The Participating institutions include:**

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology; The Rhode Island School of Design; The Mortenson Center in Engineering for Developing Communities, of the University of Colorado at Boulder; The Science Faculty of the University of Sydney; The Management Institute of St. Gallen University; The Munich Competence Center Ethiks, at the Ludwig Maximilian University; The Payson Center for International Development, at the Law School of Tulane University; The School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, at Stony Brook University; The Institute of Human Nutrition, Columbia University; The Medical School for International Health, MSIH, BGU in collaboration with Columbia University Medical Center; The Institute for Sustainable Design, Cooper Union; EARTH University, Costa Rica.



**Architecture**  
**Urban Planning**  
**Engineering**  
**Business and Management**  
**Law**  
**Art**  
**Design**  
**Health**  
**and more.**

**DISCIPLINES**



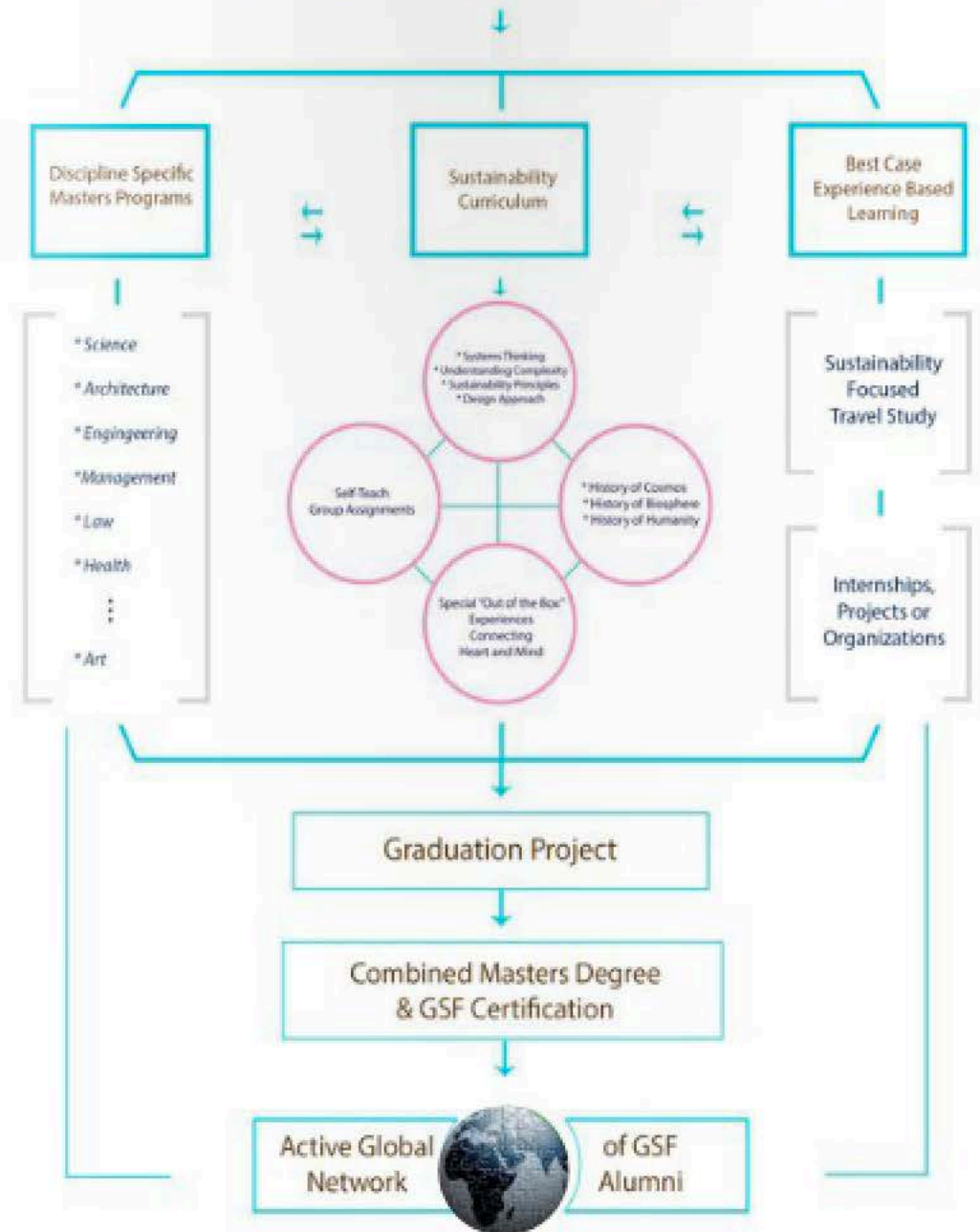
The program will combine theoretical work with involvement in actual projects. It will allow students to experience different parts of the world, and to practice teamwork in professionally mixed groups. During their respective degree programs, students will spend two intensive periods—likely summer sessions—with The Lab. **The first year's session will be devoted to an intensive immersion in key theoretical concepts that transcend each of the specialized disciplines, and will integrate various group assignments that foster multidisciplinary collaboration. The second year's programming will involve practical work on actual projects, or internships with selected organizations and relevant initiatives.**

Participating students will receive their graduate degrees in their chosen field of specialization from their home institutions and, upon completing the program, will also earn a certificate from The Lab. The latter should become a sought-after and well-respected "brand" within a short time.

**Conceptually**, the general scheme of the program is depicted by Diagram 1, below. The diagram outlines the three interrelated, main program components: a discipline-specific master's program at a participating institution; a sustainability curriculum developed and delivered by The Lab; and experience-based learning opportunities with selected projects and organizations, facilitated by The Lab.



## THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY FELLOWS PROGRAM

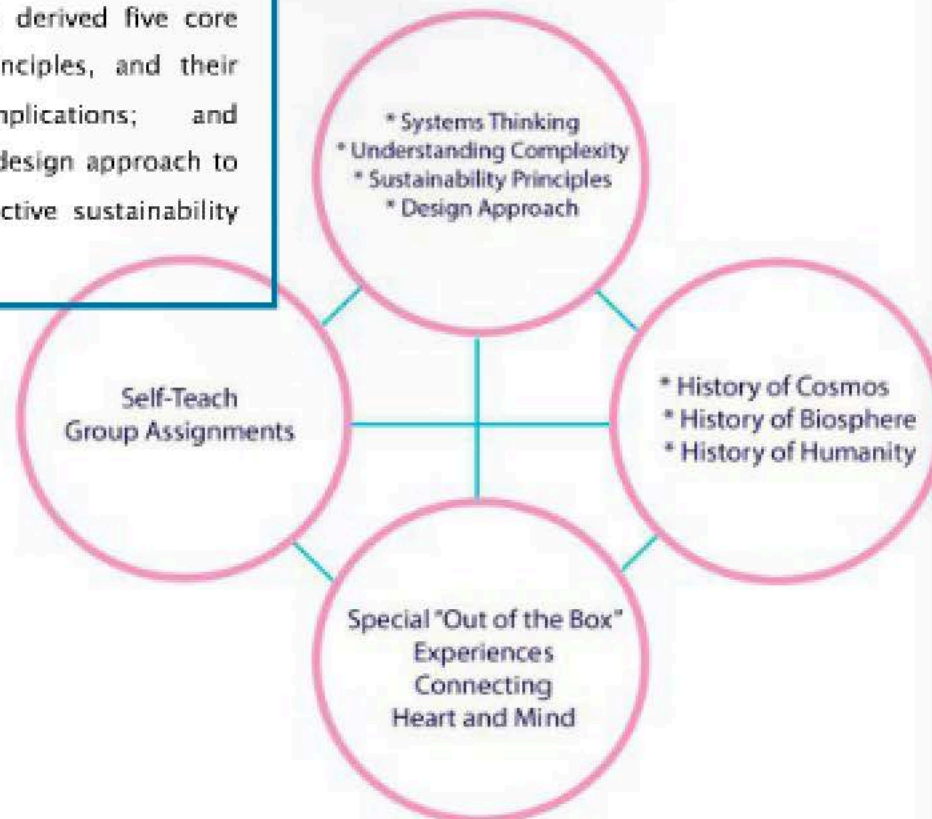


MBE, October 2012

Diagram 1: The Global Sustainability Fellows Program—General Scheme



The core sustainability curriculum will comprise a number of key elements depicted by Diagram 2, below. As depicted by the diagram, essential modules of the program will be clustered in four main groups. The first group will cover theoretical materials including elements of general system theory, system thinking and systems modeling; a perspective on evolution, change and complexity; The Lab's rigorous definition of sustainability, its derived five core sustainability principles, and their operational implications; and elements of the design approach to synthesizing effective sustainability strategies.



The second cluster will offer a comprehensive evolutionary perspective covering current knowledge concerning the history of the cosmos, the history of the biosphere, and the history of humanity. These materials will be delivered in a way that will put emphasis on underlying interrelationships, interdependencies and continuities, while at the same time highlighting key evolutionary milestones in the organization of energy and matter, living systems and society.

The third cluster will involve "out of the box" experiences designed to stimulate creativity, appreciation of change processes, enhancement of leadership qualities and the connection of outer experience with inner development and integrity.

The fourth cluster, in turn, will involve group assignments where key sustainability-related topics will be researched, synthesized and presented by interdisciplinary student teams to their peers.

Together, the components of the program will prepare students to engage their respective disciplines with a more holistic view of the world. The Lab is now working towards a pilot of the program, to launch at EARTH University in Limon, Costa Rica in the summer of 2014.



**The Sustainability Laboratory**

[www.sustainabilitylabs.org](http://www.sustainabilitylabs.org)

(<http://www.sustainabilitylabs.org/page/global-sustainability-fellows-program>)



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