

Why SDGs are at the (Lion)heart of #CannesLions2018

By Leigh Andrews

25 Jun 2018

Apart from all the inspiring global creative work, one of the stand-out factors of Cannes Lions 2018 was the introduction of the Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) Lions to this year's Festival of Creativity. Here's how this is set to boost responsible business going forward and make the world a better place through creativity.



There's no doubt that topics of diversity, inclusion and equality are becoming all the more important and celebrated at the biggest international award shows:

“ Hear, hear! [@Sy/Saller @Cannes_Lions](#) wake up call with [@TheEconomist](#): Understand the power of women, engender progressive gender portrayal and recognise the unbelievable power of female role models. [@Diageo_News @WACL1 #CannesLions pic.twitter.com/QILRVfkpGo](#)— Katie Traxton ([@KTraxton](#)) [June 18, 2018](#) ”

But more than this, there's a focus on active progress and seeing results, in using creativity beyond merely pushing product to do good and achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs adopted by the United Nations' member states in September 2015. 'Gender equality' and 'reduced inequality' are two of the SDGs.



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Pinning SDG to the Cannes (Lion)heart

This SDG focus was especially evident at the 65th Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity, where this year's Cannes Lionheart Award was presented during the final night award show to Unilever CEO Paul Polman, in recognition of his commitment to building sustainability into the heart of Unilever's operations.

Paul Polman to receive Cannes LionHeart Award

26 Apr 2018





From the start of his role in 2009, Polman has aimed to “decouple the FMCG company’s growth from the overall environmental footprint and increase its positive social impact through the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan.”

Unilever’s commitment to ‘unstereotyping advertising’ in co-founding the Unstereotype Alliance and spreading the message across the globe has seen the brand positively linked to the Cannes Lions.



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Fittingly, Polman has also worked directly with the UN and helped develop the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Business and Sustainable Development Commission.

The year before, the Cannes LionHeart was presented to Richard Curtis – the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Advocate behind charitable initiatives like Comic Relief, Red Nose Day and the Make Poverty History campaign.



Richard the LionHeart at Cannes

13 Jun 2017



Curtis also founded Project Everyone, which along with the United Nations, helped to launch and promote the Global Goals.

“ The Cannes LionHeart honorary award has highlighted the individuals who harness commercial brand power to make a significant and positive difference to people or the planet since 2014. ”

Now in 2018, Cannes has firmly pinned its SDG focus to its very core with this year’s introduction of the SDG Lions.

The Sustainable Development Goals Lions

The Sustainable Development Goals Lions, brand new this year, celebrate creative solutions and initiatives that seek to positively impact the world – work that contributed to or advanced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development across

people, planet and prosperity.

The Sustainable Development Goals Lion was developed with input from the UN and global experts with creative work entered across the 17 SDG categories.



Cannes to launch Sustainable Development Goals Lion at 2018 Festival

18 Sep 2017



In addition to raising awareness of the SDGs, the Cannes Lions SDG Lions encourage the creative industries to celebrate and support sustainability around the world.

“ Cannes Lions is putting their money where their mouth is on this, as all entry fees generated by the Sustainable Development Goals Lion will be donated to projects that advance the goals, based on consultation with potential beneficiaries such as the UN, UN agencies and NGOs. ”

SA can stand lion-proud at the fact that we had work shortlisted for the inaugural SDG Lions with **Ogilvy Johannesburg** making it onto the 'good health and wellbeing' category for Viacom MTV's #FCKHIV.



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The overall SDG Lions Grand Prix Award was presented to Host/Havas and Red Agency Sydney for the Palau Legacy Project's 'Palau Pledge'. To promote personal responsibility and encourage sustainable actions, a bold, permanent new entry visa process was created where all arriving visitors must now sign a pledge, stamped in their passports, to be good environmental stewards. This mandatory agreement, dedicated to Palau's children, needs to be signed before an officer. Customs processes were changed permanently, making it the first country to incorporate environmental practices into its immigration laws:

Every inbound visitor to Palau is now required to watch an in-flight short film that tells the story of a clumsy, careless giant - "representative of mass tourism at its worst - who comes to Palau, wreaking environmental damage. The local children

befriend him, teaching him to be eco-aware."

The film introduces passengers to the Palau Pledge, which is a new entry visa process designed to save Palau's environment as each visitor to the island-country signs a 'passport eco-pledge' before they can enter, said to be a *promise to protect Palau for future generations*. You can learn more from visiting palaupledge.com, and watch the compulsory, four-minutes-and-change in-flight movie *The Giant* below :

Proof that creativity really does have the power to make the world a better place.

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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