

Can Comics Save the World? Comics Uniting Nations Partnership rings Nasdaq opening bell

UNICEF, PCI Media Impact, World's Largest Lesson and Eco Boys and Girls aim to bring the messages of sustainable development to the children of the world

28 July 2016, New York, NY: *Comics Uniting Nations*, which counts *UNICEF* and the *World's Largest Lesson* as key partners, among others, will ring the Nasdaq Stock Market Opening Bell today.

The partnership is working to help children learn about and support the Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 as part of the [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#).

"Current social movements around the world all bear the faces of young persons," said Shannon O'Shea, from the Agenda 2030 Team at UNICEF. "Therefore when you want to make positive and lasting change in the world, you *have* to reach children and young people with your message. It's the only way."

The Agenda aims to create a better world for all people and the planet and make progress on 17 Global Goals, which include ending extreme poverty, making sure that every child receives a quality education and changing patterns of consumption and production.

Children are key to reaching these goals, and successfully reaching children also means capturing their interest and imagination in a way that feels relevant to their lives.

"Comic books are one of the most popular media of our age," said Sean Southey, co-founder of *Comics Uniting Nations* and CEO of *PCI Media Impact*. "And young people are a major target audience for the comics' industry, along with fans of all ages who love superheroes. So, we thought, let's tap into that demographic as a way to reach everyday people with the important message of the SDGs, while partnering with the number one UN group that deals with young people – UNICEF."

The initiative has also attracted the attention of some big names in the Comics world. *Chakra the Invincible*, one of India's leading superheroes created by Stan Lee and Sharad Devarajan, is the hero for two comics on Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Climate Change (SDG 13).

Maria Snyder, founder of *Eco Boys and Girls* and contributor of child-friendly content to the *Comics* initiative explained her motivation for getting involved. "Ernie Earth, Lulu Love, Patsy Peace, Ray Recycle and Sammy Sun are characters that I have created to entertain young children, as well as educate them around these 17 goals to make a better world for all," Snyder said.

The *World's Largest Lesson* uses the comics, together with other teaching and learning materials, to bring the messages of the SDGs to schools across the globe. In 2015, its inaugural year, *the World's Largest Lesson* reached millions of children in thousands of classes across 160 countries. The upcoming 'Lesson' in September 2016 will go even further. Resources for schools are available in multiple languages and include content optimized for children with disabilities.

The aim is to get as many children and young people as possible aware of and interested in the Goals. It is also about teaching everyday habits that can make a big difference.

"Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals can seem really overwhelming," said O'Shea, "but if you can break them down into everyday activities – turning off lights, bringing your own shopping bags to a store, volunteering to tutor children – you are making a difference. And, if millions of people did little things every day, it would amount to something extraordinary."

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About Comics Uniting Nations: Comics Uniting Nations is a partnership of UNICEF and the NGOs *PCI Media Impact* and *Reading with Pictures*, to make the Sustainable Development Goals accessible to the citizens of the world through comics. Working with a wide array of artists and content creators, *Comics Uniting Nations* leverages the universal visual language and transformative power of comics to educate people in every corner of the globe about the SDGs and empower them to create positive and lasting change in their own communities and worldwide.

www.comicsunitingnations.org

About PCI Media Impact: PCI Media Impact is a pioneer and world leader in Entertainment-Education and communications for social change. For 30 years, we have advanced the well-being of vulnerable populations by improving knowledge, shifting locally-determined attitudes and changing behaviors toward critical social issues. Working with a capacity-building model through our My Community approach, our unique strategy of storytelling allows millions to live healthier lives, sustainably, and in harmony with their natural world. <http://mediainpact.org/>

About Eco Boys and Girls: Eco Boys and Girls (EBAG) mission is to engage youth and families around the world to be aware of, involved with, and connected to each other and the earth and to empower them to learn about the environment and explore creative new ways to live in harmony. Eco Boys and Girls is an educational media organization that creates child-friendly, engaging books and other entertaining learning materials and programs to reach the youngest educable age group. EBAG's focus is STEM, Peace, SDG's education. EBAG's programs are implemented through partnerships with leading orgs, such as such the National Education Association, Association of Children's Museums, Search for Common Ground and the United Nations. www.ecoboysandgirls.com

About World's Largest Lesson: The World's Largest Lesson is an initiative of Project Everyone, founded by Richard Curtis, filmmaker, founder of Comic Relief and a United Nations SDG Advocate. Project Everyone seeks to put the power of great communications behind The Global Goals for Sustainable Development, accelerating the creation of a fairer world by 2030, where extreme poverty has been eradicated, climate change is properly addressed and injustice and inequality are unacceptable. As an integral part of Project Everyone's work the World's Largest Lesson is an initiative delivered in partnership with UNICEF to raise children and young people's awareness of the new Global Goals and encourage them to become actively involved in their achievement. The second World's Largest Lesson will take place during the week of the 18th September and schools across the globe will take part. <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>

About UNICEF: UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. www.unicef.org

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