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Why Education for Future Leaders Holds the Key to a Safer and More Sustainable Planet

By Darinka Aleksic

A planet under pressure needs leaders who can read signals early, make grounded choices, and act with a level of maturity that lines up with long-term survival. Education shapes that capacity. Not through lofty theory, but through steady exposure to real data, hands-on experimentation, and a mindset that treats sustainability as a daily practice rather than a slogan.

Across many parts of the world, younger professionals are stepping straight into environments shaped by climate tension, resource limits, digital influence, and shifting public expectations. They are meeting challenges that require skills their predecessors often developed late in their careers. A strong learning base changes that timeline. It places sharper thinking at the very start.

A Foundation That Sets the Tone for Future Leadership



Designing Futures competition by BE OPEN

When programs focus on real-world sustainability priorities, students stop treating global issues as distant puzzles. They begin working with them in practical ways. Several recent initiatives illustrate how that shift is forming.

In 2025, the [Designing Futures competition](#) by BE OPEN sent a clear signal. It was built to translate urgent action into something younger creatives could actually influence. The competition encouraged students and recent graduates to adjust and update the SDG agenda in line with current realities.

The objective was simple. Bring more young people into the actual implementation of sustainable action plans. Not as observers. As contributors.

The award was presented on October 29 at the World Futures Studies Federation World Conference in Cape Town, South Africa. That setting matters. A global stage. A global audience. A global responsibility.

Dr. Erik F. Øverland, President and Chairman of the WFSF, spoke at the opening plenary session. He announced that the recognition was given to Elena Baturina, Founder of the BE OPEN think-tank, for supporting young people's creativity and initiatives connected to a sustainable future.

He pointed out that her think-tank aims to accelerate the shift toward sustainable practices and that she remains a consistent supporter of creative education, innovations and sustainability efforts.

Competitions like Designing Futures give students more than a trophy. They offer early feedback loops, pressure, attention, and a supportive network. All of that forms a habit of thinking that lasts well beyond graduation.

BE OPEN has built an ecosystem dedicated to creative development. It operates through conferences, exhibitions, competitions, and art events for students around the world.

The goal is to encourage younger generations to approach sustainability with a mindset that blends creativity with discipline. When that combination forms early, it reshapes the way a leader acts later.

One of the most valuable parts of BE OPEN initiatives comes from the public platform they provide. Students receive visibility.

Their projects gain structure. That exposure builds confidence and lets them test ideas outside of classroom walls.