

# Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership (YEL) Model of Oaktree (Australia)

Iftekhar Ul Karim

ULAB School of Business, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), Dhaka (Bangladesh)

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This conceptual and ethnographic study namely “Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership (YEL) Model of Oaktree (Australia)” explores and analyzes the unique entrepreneurial and leadership aspects of Oaktree in order to review and revamp the unique Australian model for global knowledge transfer and worldwide implications.

**Background:** In the backdrop of the role of Oaktree in poverty alleviation and establishing social sector sustainability, this research contributes to understand the discourse of youth-led and youth-run social innovations in the context of youth management and nonprofit sector of Australia, with relevance for scalability across the globe.

**Approach:** With an ethnographic case study based research design, the type of data and analysis of this study is substantially primary, inductive and qualitative from a theoretical and conceptual standpoint to finally come up with concrete categorical conclusions for further research.

**Findings:** The study sequentially narrates the vital elements of the youth entrepreneurship and leadership features catering to the development of the Oaktree’s YEL Model, which is embedded but yet not researched and explored. Finally, in the framework of the YEL Model, the study discusses the core strategic and policy recommendations for such youth-led and youth-run organizational stakeholders.

**Value:** In this youth management and entrepreneurial leadership context, the understanding of the construction and composition of underlying internalities and externalities become instrumental. With the emerging trends of youth entrepreneurship and leadership globally, therefore understanding the different set-ups of YEL Model also becomes significant for the global youth sustainability and youth innovations.

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**Keywords:** *Youth Entrepreneurship, Youth Leadership, Social Innovation, Stakeholder Collaboration, Youth Sustainability, Policy Advocacy*

## 1. Introduction

The entrepreneurial mind of a leader and the leadership behavior of an entrepreneur (Nicholson, 1998) holistically culminate into an intersection of entrepreneurship and leadership (Cogliser & Brigham, 2004) giving rise to both new research contexts (Okudana & Rzasa, 2006) and practical entrepreneurial aspects (Chan et al., 2012) in the multifaceted discourse of leadership. The joint forces of leadership and entrepreneurship play vital roles for the construct of youth leadership and youth entrepreneurship - which across the youth initiatives globally are considered driving forces of youth development with sustainable development constructed by the world’s young generation with the age group of 15-35 worldwide (Chan et al., 2012; Okudana & Rzasa, 2006; African Union, 2006). In this domain of youth entrepreneurship and leadership, unified and research based models involving the young change agents in their real world scenarios are interestingly turning out to be vital inputs for both the academicians and practitioners, both theoretically and practically (Raines & Prakash, 2005).

Chan et al. (2012) argued that individuals concurrently high in entrepreneurial and leadership career motivations tend to obtain self-directed career attitudes, while with the shift in work styles, the range of professional options accessible to youth entering the workforce has furthermore extended. In this youth context, previously from an evolutionary approach adopted by Nicholson (1998) the thought of entrepreneurial leadership is relevant where it is positioned as evolutionary in nature, and is backed by gradual higher achievement striving, self-discipline and speedy decision-making attributes of the leader. One of the strongest theoretical pillars of this intersection of leadership and entrepreneurship can be traced back to one of the seminal researches of Cogliser and Brigham (2004) focusing on vision as the leader’s goals being communicated in a motivating manner to followers, and thus the leader adopting a sense-making component considers a range of measures intended to realize the vision, whereas given an entrepreneurial environment, vision also similarly signifies an entrepreneur’s goals boosting confidence for uncertainty in future together with utilizing resources both effectively and efficiently (Cogliser & Brigham, 2004). In the same swing and spirit, youth leadership and entrepreneurship are also positioned to be revealed as joint forces for not only youth development, but also the youth initiatives for social, economic and environmental breakthroughs (Chan et al., 2012; Okudana & Rzasa, 2006).

An international study conducted by Hemmen et al. (2015) relevantly and contextually highlighted the relationship between leadership styles and innovative entrepreneurship pinpointing that participative leadership representing high value and vigor for innovative entrepreneurship. That being said, youth participation with manifold youth endeavors with young CEOs prominently contribute to the sustainable development of the world globally (Ling et al., 2008; African Union, 2006). In this context, Ling et al. (2008) argued for the transformational leadership's constructive role in promoting corporate entrepreneurship, while young CEOs likewise indulge in transactional and transformational motivational endeavors drawn by the need to transform their young subordinates, colleagues, organizations and co-founders (Ling et al., 2008; Eyal & Kark, 2004).

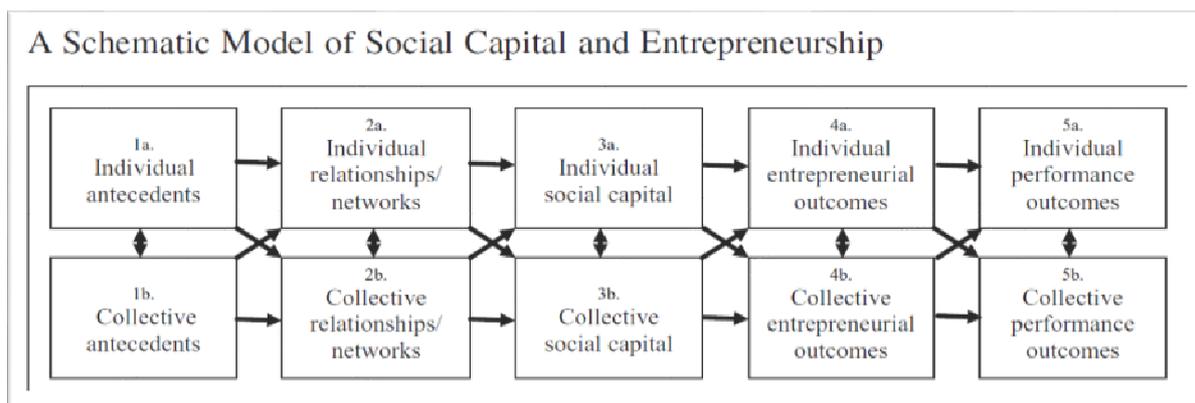
Eyal and Kark (2004) argued that depending on the leadership styles, the entrepreneurial strategies also keep on changing, and thus accordingly transformational leadership can promote a vigorous entrepreneurial strategy with radical change, whereas monitoring leadership can promote limited through calculated entrepreneurial strategy backed by the sense of organizational entrepreneurship requiring leadership and entrepreneurship vitally (Eyal & Kark, 2004). In this domain of corporate and organizational entrepreneurship, youth leadership play instrumental roles by catering to the need-based and issue-specific enterprising solutions for everyday organizational challenges in corporations (Ling et al., 2008; Eyal & Kark, 2004).

Developing the construct of "entrepreneurial leadership", Gupta et al. (2004) postulated that given today's competitive business environment a unique type of entrepreneurial leader who is dissimilar from the behavioral forms of leaders is required. Giving rise to the notion of simultaneous existence of entrepreneurship and leadership behaviors as instrumental inputs in sustaining and scaling the progress of the organizations therefore also becomes critically essential for new organizations with youth leadership and entrepreneurship facets (Cogliseria & Brigham, 2004; Gupta et al., 2004). Thus entrepreneurial leadership works for the strategic value creation for youth-led and youth-run enterprises, social organizations, nonprofits and corporations (Ruvio et al., 2010; Muscat & Whitty, 2007) incorporating that entrepreneurial mind-set as a core element of strategic management as vitally advocated by Gupta et al. (2004).

Such common trends of entrepreneurship and leadership (Vecchio, 2003) raise greater theoretical query of its joint forces, and such entrepreneurial identity development help the youth enact leadership and entrepreneurship together (Lewis, 2015). Having said that, in what form and framework the joint forces shall underpin the organization has remained unexplored. Roper and Cheney (2005) in this context attempted to lay the foundation of a social meaning for young entrepreneurs in the light of leadership orientation, nevertheless the guiding principle to theoretically and conceptually support these youth modalities remain unexplored. Lin et al. (2011) and Darling et al. (2007) respectively however argued for the structural dimension and innovational developments in light of the joint forces of leadership and entrepreneurship (Miroff, 2003), nonetheless the conceptual framework based on both textual and contextual understanding remain the point of exploration in this perspective of the research.

## **2. Theoretical Context**

After the growing delineation of social relationships underlying both entrepreneurship and leadership (Estrin et al., 2013; Light & Dana, 2013; Muscat & Whitty, 2007), therefore social capital could be regarded as a foundational theory of youth entrepreneurial leadership, also as hinted from the works of Gedajlovic et al. (2013). Social capital is about the significance of social networks and institutional affiliations, linking similar people and bridging between dissimilar people formulating how these people and entities interact with and benefit from each other (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). Securing payback by virtue of attachment to social networks or other social structures, social capital is considered a collective good that results in augmented sharing and solidarity among actors in the network that would be otherwise inaccessible (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). Considering the goodwill that others have toward us as a resourceful asset, social capital thus represents the value embedded in the social relationships of individuals or collectives (Gedajlovic et al., 2013) and which is convertible into economic capital, profitable returns and win-win deals affecting economic growth. In the research of Gedajlovic et al. (2013), a robust relationship between social capital and entrepreneurship has been focused upon pinpointing essential movements and flows through the social capital and entrepreneurship (SC-E) model.



**Fig. 1) Social capital and Entrepreneurship (SC-E) model [Adapted from Gedajlovic et al. (2013)]**

The figure above depicts the underlying antecedents and outcomes of social capital relating to entrepreneurship under the (SC-E) model, delineating the micro-processes connecting social capital antecedents with social capital and its outcomes across individuals and collectives (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). The antecedents (Boxes 1a and 1b) uphold the development of relationships and networks, thereby social capital. Social attributes, together with cognitive traits and/or individual (leadership) characteristics of young entrepreneurs are considered antecedents, which then develop performance outcomes eventually (Gedajlovic et al., 2013). The actual resources are referred to as social capital (Boxes 3a and 3b), while Boxes 2a and 2b represent the nature of the relationships providing those resources and associated processes. Further to that, social capital (e.g., information, trust, and norms) behaves as mediator between the nets of relationships and the detection of breakthroughs, scopes, financing of ventures, ground-breaking discoveries, or new market prospects (Boxes 4a and 4b), which eventually direct to further solid performance outcomes, for instance profitability (Boxes 5a and 5b) as studied by Gedajlovic et al. (2013). In this regard, the acquisition and management of social capital (Gedajlovic et al., 2013) positively affect entrepreneurial success of both leading individuals and collectives, which includes both young and established organizations. It can be therefore theorized that a strong element of social capital underlines the growing notion of youth entrepreneurial leadership (Estrin et al., 2013; Light & Dana, 2013; Kansikas et al., 2012; Muscat & Whitty, 2007).

### 3. Methodology and Methods

As per the relational basis of the foundational knowledge on leadership and entrepreneurship (Nicholson, 1998; Cogliser & Brigham, 2004) underpinned by social entrepreneurship for youth entrepreneurial leadership from different perspectives (Gedajlovic et al., 2013; Muscat & Whitty, 2007), the social constructionist methodological standpoint in terms of both ontology (view of reality) and epistemology (view of knowledge) has been adopted in this research (6 & Bellamy, 2012). The role of theory in this research is considered inductive as it started without a concrete theory, but merely to pre-understand it has positioned the research anchored in supporting theoretical standpoints (6 & Bellamy, 2012). It adopts the inductive theory building approach and offers the theoretical notions in the form of finally formulated research-based model on this study thematically and conceptually (Silverman, 2011). The inference of this study is considered descriptive as it demonstrates the theoretical exploration of youth entrepreneurial leadership by identifying and describing the relevant framework and model in a descriptive propositional manner and on an ad hoc basis (6 & Bellamy, 2012; Silverman, 2011).

In this research context, with an ethnographic in-depth case study based research design, the type of data and analysis of this study is substantially primary, inductive and qualitative from a theoretical and conceptual standpoint to finally come up with concrete categorical conclusions and policy recommendations for further research (Silverman, 2011). Furthermore, the way of life or culture of the chosen social group involves studying the natural setting of the focused social group being studied and thus observing their daily activities to ethnographically capture the social meanings of the study context (Silverman, 2011). As the type of data of this study is mainly qualitative, subsequently the analysis is based on grounded theory approach supported by theoretical sampling in line with ethnographic participant observation and corresponding fieldworks and field-notes for proceeding with the analysis and discussion flows of the research (Silverman, 2011).

### 4. Analysis, Discussion and Findings

#### 4.1 Foundational story of Oaktree

Oaktree, founded in Melbourne by two visionary youths Hugh Evans and Nicolas Mackay in 2003 offers an inspirational journey of leadership and entrepreneurship since its outset. Winning a World Vision contest to visit development programs in the Philippines, then exchange programs to Himalayas in India, and further explorative

trips to the rural valley communities in South Africa – contributed immensely to understand the status quo on inequality and establish Oaktree by Evans (and Mackay together with other young minds) with the core values of empowering youth to combat poverty worldwide. Born and brought up in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne in Australia, exploring the world through local lenses in Asia and Africa and thus finding local avenues of collaborative means were only possible for them due to the potential of youth force which was stirred by their encounters in the slums. In his own words Evan recalls the following emotions as the inspiration to start with this initiative to lead a change:

*The greatest injustice I witnessed this year happened, not when comparing the poor of India to the rich of India, but upon arriving home. I couldn't understand why we as Australians are so determined, even to the point of complaining, to get the latest mobile phone ... then comparing this to walking through the market of India and seeing a man with no legs, simply a piece of rubber tied to his waist to stop the skin on his pelvis from scraping away ... all he asks for is the equivalent of 20 cents.*

(Farouque, 2008)

#### 4.2 What is Oaktree all about today?

Oaktree (formerly The Oaktree Foundation) having offices in every Australian state is Australia's largest youth-run organization based in Richmond, Melbourne and specializes in policy advocacy, international aid and development projects through partnership building, sustainable community-driven initiatives and fostering youth entrepreneurship by training young people to be effective agents of change in the society. Oaktree is also Australia's largest youth-led organization investing in young people to be informed change-makers, partnering with innovative organizations across the Asia-Pacific enhancing collective impact and contributing to policy change by influencing decision makers and parliamentarians. As an Australia-based non-government organization that works to build community and political support for action on ending extreme poverty, and provides aid and development to countries in need across the Asia Pacific, locally it is run by 187 young people aged from 16 to 26 (and overseen by an advisory board), and internationally Oaktree partners work with developing communities to support quality educational opportunities for young people aged from 12 to 30 years (Oaktree, 2016).

Recognizing the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which Oaktree operates today, the value statement of Oaktree: “We work, learn and play on the land of the Wurundjeri (aboriginal) people, and pay our respects to their elders past and present” - coincides with the mission statement of Oaktree: “Young people leading a movement to end extreme poverty” – as both inspire self-identity and self-empowerment of youths, and contributes to the vision statement of Oaktree: “A world free from poverty”. Thus Oaktree aspires to achieve its vision by the objectives of raising awareness about extreme poverty, fundraising to tackle poverty overseas, and influencing policy change at the highest levels of the Australian Government (Oaktree, 2016).

#### 4.3 Role of Oaktree in poverty alleviation and social justice

##### 4.3.1 Oaktree's noble path of self-fulfillment by self-extinction

Oaktree is fundamentally tuned to mobilize youths to take constructive actions to combat poverty through local advocacy, fund raising endeavors, voicing for international aid toward poverty alleviation, campaigning for ending extreme poverty and hunger, and most importantly also for providing the visionary youthful perspective to uproot poverty from all the spheres of lives. In a hypothetical ideal state when poverty is actually alleviated globally, Oaktree proudly claims that its existence as an entity is not required consequently, making Oaktree an unique organization to walk the noble path of self-fulfillment and self-actualization by self-extinguishment and self-extinction for the sake of poverty alleviation on the face of this earth.

##### 4.3.2 Oaktree's mixed method approach: Killing two birds with one stone strategy

Running innovative projects supporting poverty alleviation and contributing to poverty eradication boils down to interesting strategies of Oaktree to combat poverty. For instance, **[Project-1] “Make Poverty History concert”** was such an innovative endeavor organized by the early Oaktree members on behalf of the Make Poverty History Coalition in Australia with a view to generating wide public support for the Make Poverty History campaign, and also to encourage the G20 to make policies that are equitable for developing countries all across the world. With a mixed method approach of Oaktree, both public awareness (especially the young generation) and policy advocacy purposes are therefore met when aims of such Oaktree events are set to create public awareness of preventable poverty and concurrently to get the message to members of the global summits like the ones of G20 that “more financial aid should be given to poorer nations”, intentionally and innovatively timing the concert to coincide with the G20 Summit to achieve the desired goals. In this context, Oaktree adopts a realist approach for political advocacy to figure out the political (or business) angles of social causes (backed by moral reasons) in influencing policymakers and parliamentarians for policy change/public awareness. Oaktree itself is non-partisan and non-political, and understands that policy is separated from party.

#### *4.3.3 Oaktree's innovative strategy of Golden Timing*

Keeping this innovative strategy of golden timing of Oaktree in mind, another large-scale successful project can be cited namely **[Project-2] "Stakeout"** which utilizes the timing and platform of mega national occasions in Australia, e.g. national elections 2016, and just a week before the election hundreds of young leaders camp out in marginal electorates across the country. Crammed with unforgettable workshops, panels and plenary run by experts in social change and politics, the Stakeout is both a powerful opportunity to have impact and transformative growth moment for the youths where they are equipped with the skills and be an effective leader of tomorrow collaborating with a number of the best change makers in Australia. Putting poverty on the agenda for election campaign, like-minded young Oaktree people all commit to change the conversation about aid building a more just future for all. Capitalizing on the golden timing of national elections, Oaktree's Stakeout project offers the Australian policymakers innovative policy platforms to witness public sentiment on critical issues like the ones of Australian aid showcasing voters' care about aid impacting the elimination of poverty, and establishing of social justice. With all these inspirations, in 2016's Stakeout almost 400 Oaktree members/supporters participated in campaigns to utilize the political momentum, golden time and space for better Australian aid showcasing youth participation and mobilization resulting in almost 20K public awareness motivational conversations across Australia (Oaktree, 2016).

#### *4.3.4 Oaktree's approach of modeling poverty: Walk the Talk strategy*

In collaboration with Global Poverty Project, Oaktree conducts its one of the most successful projects namely **[Project-3] "Live Below the Line (LBL)"** which is a 5-day extreme poverty awareness and fundraising campaign across Australia encouraging general public to walk the talk by literally living the daily challenges faced by the billions of people experiencing extreme poverty globally. The model works in an overwhelming manner where for each of the five days of the campaign the participants are encouraged to limit their food consumption to the equivalent of the extreme poverty line (AU\$2 - Australian equivalent of the extreme poverty line), and thus bringing extreme poverty to the awareness of others with their daily survival experiences (Oaktree, 2016). Therefore, Live Below the Line is regarded as an innovative fundraising campaign that helps Australians take action on poverty, where thousands of participants feed themselves on \$2 a day for five days and thus by taking the unique Live Below the Line challenge, Oaktree is raising much-needed funds for work that helps end poverty cyclically. Even though Oaktree understands that poverty is a complex, multifaceted experience not limited to financial constraints or a lack of food, however Live Below the Line acts as a small insight into what it is like to live with limited options utilizing the funds raised to enable young people to have their voices heard (Oaktree, 2016).

#### *4.3.5 Oaktree's international development and poverty alleviation: Grassroots-up Strategy*

Not only in Australia, but also across Asia Pacific and beyond, Oaktree is (or was) active with its international development projects supporting international aid and development, including countries like Cambodia (Beacon's School Initiative), East Timor (Youth Empowerment Peace Building Project), South Africa (HIV/Aids Peer Mentorship Scheme), Papua New Guinea (Vocational and Community School Teacher Training Project), and also India and Myanmar. All these projects both locally and globally also bring successful results for Oaktree, for instance, in 2009 together with World Vision and other advocacy groups, Oaktree's End Child Slavery campaign contributed to an announcement by Cadbury Australia that it will change its milk chocolate range to fair trade sources. In this context, Oaktree supports overseas partners in two ways: first, by creating partnerships for education, supporting locally based organizations to design, implement, monitor and evaluate innovative education projects; the second is through youth-led partnerships – relationships with other youth-led organizations across the Asia-Pacific with the goal of enhancing collective impact (Oaktree, 2016). For innovative education partnerships, Oaktree focuses on innovative education programs that change lives on an individual level and scale in impact by contributing to systemic reforms through partnering with 5 organizations, supporting 7 projects and thousands of young people across Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea (Oaktree, 2016). Again, for youth-led innovative partnerships, Oaktree focuses on youth-led organizations across the Asia-Pacific learning from and strengthening each other through skills sharing and mutual capacity development for positive social change and fighting poverty, utilizing peer partnership tools in political campaigning, fighting corruption, and creating spaces for young people by currently partnering with 4 organizations across Cambodia, India, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea (Oaktree, 2016). Consequently, Oaktree's inclusion of young people in decisions that affect them involving development actors is deemed to be essential in creating strong, long-term solutions that address root causes of poverty and building future leadership capacity. Instead of top-down approach to development, thus Oaktree believes sustainable change needs to be led from the grassroots-up, and therefore Oaktree successfully partners with experienced locally positioned organizations to lead change with a vision to break the cycle of poverty and create change within one generation (Oaktree, 2016).

#### *4.3.6 Oaktree's alignment with UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

The core 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations adopted on 25 September 2015 as part of the

Official Agenda for Sustainable Development (Costanza et al., 2016) is highly valued by Oaktree at large. Oaktree both directly and indirectly ratifies a number of UN SDGs, which are highlighted below:

Direct ratification	Indirect ratification
<b>SDG-1: End Poverty</b>	<b>SDG-3: Well-Being of Youth</b>
<b>SDG-4: Quality Education</b>	<b>SDG-8: Economic Growth</b>
<b>SDG-5: Gender Equality</b>	<b>SDG-9: Fostering Innovation</b>
<b>SDG-10: Reduce Inequality</b>	<b>SDG-12: Sustainable Consumption</b>
<b>SDG-16: Social Justice</b>	<b>SDG-13: Climate Change</b>
<b>SDG-17: Global Partnerships</b>	

**Fig. 2) Oaktree and SDGs**

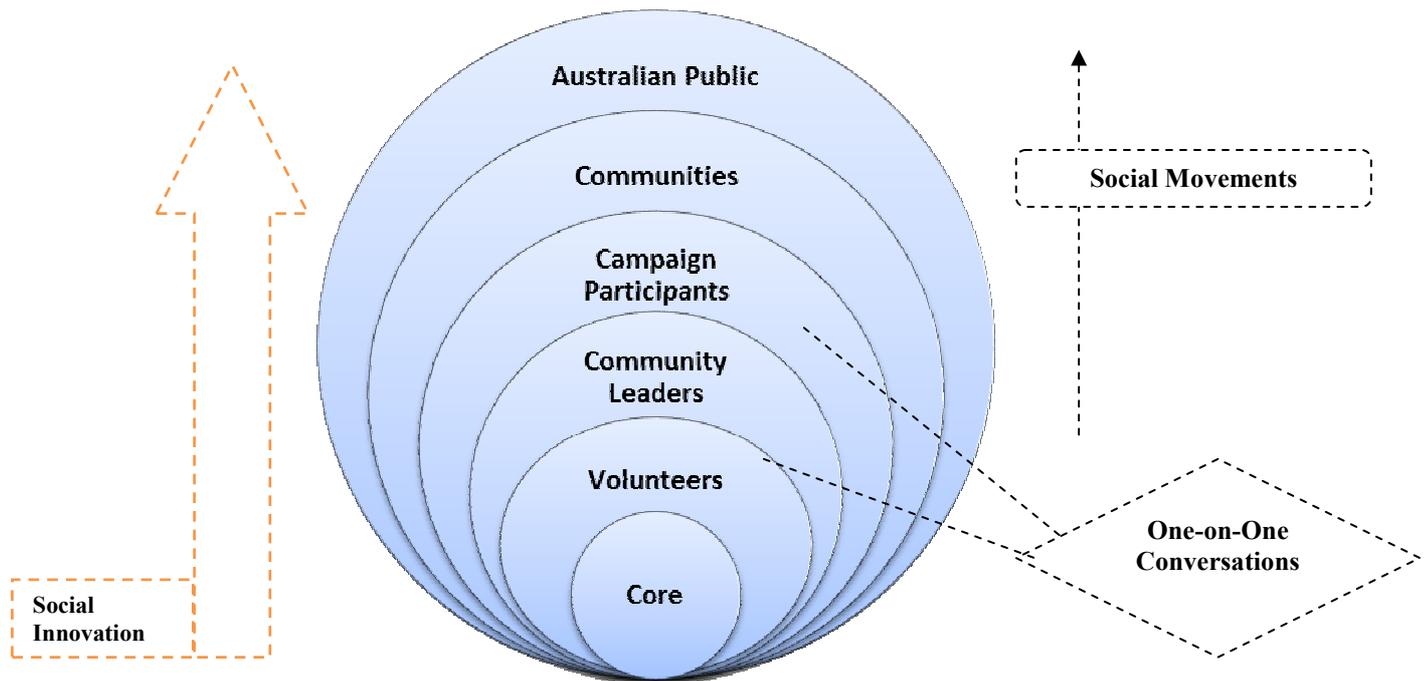
Oaktree, on a greater scale and scope, is determined and constructively contributing to poverty reduction worldwide (SDG-1), promoting equitable quality education for the disadvantaged youth (SDG-4), gender equality through empowering youth and women education (SDG-5), reducing inequality among communities by voicing for the poor and storing social justice in political and social systems, also by conducting Campaign on Tax Payments to resolve tax avoidance of developed countries and thus enhancing bargaining powers of poor nations (SDG-10& 16), and also reinforcing the means of revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development through its international collaborations and global youth-led partnerships (SDG-17). Again, on a limited scale and scope, Oaktree is contributing to the social sustainability and well-being of the youth by providing spaces for youth empowerment, motivation, participation and satisfaction (SDG-3); equipping the youths with soft skills to engage in youth entrepreneurships, employability and economic opportunities (SDG-8); solidly fostering social innovation by unique socially viable models of campaigns, engagements, advocacy and fundraising (SDG-9); promoting sustainable and responsible consumption by cooperating with projects like LBL where participants limit their food consumption to the equivalent of the extreme poverty line (SDG-12); and finally also to climate change and climate finance by conducting Collective Future Campaigns for affected farmers (SDG-13).

#### 4.4. Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership facets of Oaktree

##### 4.4.1 Oaktree's Social Innovation: Both means and ends are socially innovative

Social innovation is understood both as outcome and process, especially as per the European Commission's definition social innovations denote the "development and implementation of new ideas to meet social needs and create new social relationships and collaborations" (Gaftoneanu, 2016), and also as per the Young Foundation's definition where social innovation stands for "innovations that are social in both their ends and their means"... "innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society's capacity to act" (Björk, 2015). In this context of social innovation, Oaktree is well in line with development and implementation of new social ideas to combat poverty, fundraising for social benefits, creation of new social relationships and collaborations by involving youths and reaching out to the people, state and institutions for policy advocacy and public awareness; and thus building up society's youthful capacities to voice for international aid toward social justice and to stand against inequality toward extreme poverty. By focusing on inflow of young volunteers, diversifying their social roles and empowering/equipping them accordingly, Oaktree creates inspirations for youths as they look up to Oaktree. Harnessing the potential of young people which is untapped resources and extracting the resourceful value from the youth for positive social changes Oaktree produces its own social innovation narrative as utilizing youths to combat poverty and also bridging the gap between grassroots and parliamentarians itself is innovative, socially challenging, passionate and long-term. All in all, Oaktree is a luminous example of social innovation – being socially innovative in both their ends (for social justice) and their means (for social youth-led engagements). In the words of the Oaktree CEO Mr. Chris Wallace:

*"The organization (Oaktree) itself is a social innovation where ideas are backed by youth-led actions.... Oaktree is a powerful narrative of Australian Aid where the means is social movement of young Australian citizens and the end is creating social change...with one-on-one conversation with Australian people."*



**Fig. 3) Social Innovation process of Oaktree**

**4.4.2 Oaktree's Youth Leadership: Incubator for tomorrow's leaders**

If we look into today's progressive Australia, it is easy to find out the leadership created by Oaktree over the years and its success in transforming volunteers of today into leaders of tomorrow. Not only that yesterday's founders of Oaktree are today's major nonprofit leaders in organizations like Change, Save the Children, World Vision, Avaaz, Oxfam, Global Citizen both at home and abroad, but overwhelmingly also at government levels, for instance today's Federal MP's (Adam Bent) Office in Melbourne is mostly echoed by staffs those who are proud Oaktree alumni and graduates. Moreover apart from nonprofit and state, also in corporate levels Oaktree ex-members are performing excellently as reported by their supervisors back to Oaktree. The famous McKinsey Consultancy's (Australia) example is highly relevant here, as it has got one informal office joke to brand one part of the office as the "Oaktree Wing" due to most of that part is filled with McKinsey consultants (-cum-Oaktree Alumni) who once lived the dream of Oaktree in their early youth. In the words of one of the leaders (Tim) of Oaktree (Oaktree, 2016):

*"Truly Oaktree is the incubator of tomorrow's leadership in Australia...Anyone today in Australian national leadership can be traced back to three origins: Oaktree, Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) or Australian Student Politics....We(in Oaktree) intentionally develop leadership in others to create a leaderful team - one where leadership is concurrent, collective and collaborative"*

All this is possible only because of the quality of youth leadership Oaktree is able to instill in its today's volunteers by providing significant leadership roles where young people take actions, providing gigantic operational and strategic responsibilities and amazing leadership training in everyday Oaktree life of the volunteers and board members, especially at an early stage of their young careers (<25) with no barriers of age, experience, expertise and hierarchy. Such youth platforms of nurturing leadership is not found elsewhere in the traditional world to actually walk the talk and thus living the life of a leader from day one. It empowers and motivates youths tremendously when the CFO of World Vision (Australia) is actually supervising the Oaktree CFO in one of its subcommittees. The youth leadership of Oaktree is a living example of what the father of management Peter Drunker once said: "The best way to predict the future is to create it." That is why Oaktree has secured its place with due dignity at the "Future of Progressive Australia" Conference in the capital Canberra represented by the CEO of Oaktree Chris Wallace, and attended by major 250 CEOs of Australia who plan to shape the next generation of Australian leadership leading innovative change globally.

**4.4.3 Oaktree's Youth Entrepreneurship: Innovative organizational systems and learning**

Oaktree all across its departments and units, whether it be top-down or bottom-up, whether it be about input, output or sideput - nurtures tremendous amount of youth entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning for the young Oaktree volunteers by providing the risk taking appetite for problem solving, creating the mentorship-driven space and learning culture to do things, take actions and solve problems. Fostering ample amount of

entrepreneurship, Oaktree services are designed keeping the enterprising element for the young people in mind, and helping the youth utilize their freedom, flexibility and friendships to make amazing things happen. Supervised by an external supervisory/advisory Board of Directors (of nonprofit practitioners) which is distinct from the executive team (management) by the “Board-Executive Distinction Policy” (Oaktree, 2016), Oaktree is led by the managerial and executive head as CEO together with executive/management functional heads of CFO, Chief of Staffs, Marketing & Fundraising, Campaign, International Engagements and Live Below the Line (LBL Project), and supported by departmental units/sub-units led by sub-functional heads; and also facilitated by sub-committees led by (supervisory) board members (Oaktree, 2016).

#### 4.4.3.1 CFO's checkpoint of youth compliance strategy

CFO acts as a “*checkpoint of compliance*” (as narrated by the current CFO Esther), rather than directing which gives enough room for entrepreneurial endeavors of the shared services of Finance & Legal units, and also providing the opportunities of technical learning on financial, legal, accountancy, auditing, taxation, insurance, rent/leasing, booking, procurement and contracting together with variety of learning opportunities, job-rotation policies, management reporting and socializing together – all which equip the volunteers with the vital entrepreneurial skills to build on their enterprising resource-base for future entrepreneurship and employability.

#### 4.4.3.2 Marketing & Fundraising (M&F)'s Categorized innovation strategy

M&F department across its fundraising (grassroots) and support/corporate engagement units is highly open for innovation and focuses on consensus building, invites possible models of innovative funding and evaluates ideas on merit. The M&F team also effectively leads on diversifying and growing Oaktree's revenue, building relationships with prospective donors to support Oaktree financially, developing strategic partnerships which grow Oaktree's reach and impact, and incubating and testing innovative fundraising campaigns and initiatives (Oaktree, 2016). In doing so, innovation here interestingly is categorized into “random innovation” (e.g. fundraising from restaurant tips) and “guided innovation” (e.g. structured fundraising from anti-poverty week in schools), which eventually promotes both random and guided multifaceted innovative idea generation and innovation learning processes for the young volunteers. Whole team working day, whole team lunch and weekly leadership meeting are some entrepreneurial platforms to mingle for more innovative discussions and shared learning in M&F. In the words of the new M&F head Alanda, the inspirations of M&F department can be understood as follows:

*“Oaktree's USP is that it is not allowing beyond youth by setting the age of the organization. Organizational structure can discipline young volunteers, being young itself is a privilege and a group of young people can change a lot. If I postpone my ideas, I won't get the chance at all to implement it. That's why I go ahead. If young people can't find opportunities elsewhere, you can create your own organization. I'm a volunteer, as far as I can eat every day, I'm fine.”*

#### 4.4.3.3 Chief of Staffs (CoS)'s 3Cs for entrepreneurship – Clarity, Confidence & Compassion

CoS along with her Training & Development, Recruitment & Diversity and Australian seven states' (except Northern territory) Directors heavily indulge in consultation processes and engagement with people while strategy creation for Oaktree. This unit is the first stepping stone of the volunteers to go through the Oaktree induction and introduction phases, for retaining learning motivations of the volunteers, ensuring diversity in Oaktree culture, clarifying communication channels for explicit discussions, and also specifying clear roles to avoid vagueness with volunteers. All in all, as emerged from the discussions, thus CoS is determined to provide and build the necessary 3Cs – clarity, confidence and compassion within Oaktree volunteers. Overall, this unit's providing of practical culture in Oaktree on facing realities, team specific entrepreneurial trainings, learning through outreach, campaigns and projects; and providing opportunities to realize potentials heavily facilitate and foster entrepreneurship in Oaktree.

#### 4.4.3.4 Campaigns team's Impactful youth entrepreneurship style

Campaigns department head together with his deputy, head organizer, communications adviser and campaign advisers run a huge portfolio comprising of robust units like policy engagement, mobilization, outreach coordination, lead and digital organizing etc.; along with conducting campaign leadership meetings, nationwide pledges and petitions, and also project based panels and plenary. In the words of the Head of Campaign Tim, the impact of this department that heavily cultivates youth entrepreneurship among volunteers can be understood as follows (Oaktree, 2016):

*“We don't measure people by how many hours they work. We do care about accomplishing amazing amounts of important work. We strive for consistent strong performance so colleagues can rely on us. We hire only “A” players and have a deep commitment to building a great team. Consistent average performance is cut to make way for a culture that allows significant freedom and real responsibility and to ensure there are star players in every role. We pull down silos, both in our own portfolio, and across the organization, pursuing opportunities for collaboration to strengthen Oaktree's collective impact. We focus on great results rather than on process. We have a bias-to-action, and avoid analysis-paralysis.”*

Enterprisingly enough, the Campaigns team works to identify the most high-impact entrepreneurial opportunities to bring the conversation around poverty to the forefront - whether this is a Road trip advocating for more and better aid or tax justice, or working with Community Leaders to build momentum around the issue through engaging with the public (Oaktree, 2016). In this way, high level of youth entrepreneurship is tested, incubated and implemented nationwide by the young Oaktree volunteers.

#### *4.4.3.5 International Engagements (IE): Combination of funded and non-funded scheme*

IE department starts with an innovative youth situation analysis to figure out the possibility of youth engagement context, diversity factors and autonomy globally, and works through interesting cross-functional units and sub-units like country management (with partnership managers), youth engagement (with partnership managers), and deputy IE (with communications, inclusivity and team support). IE functions with a combination of funded and non-funded scheme, respectively on funding international education projects (funded model) and international exchange for capacity development of Oaktree partners (non-funded model) – which is highly interesting combined scheme for diversified youth entrepreneurship. In the words of the Head of IE Geordie, Oaktree's skills building for youth entrepreneurship can be understood as follows (Oaktree, 2016):

*“We commit to providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels - early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to life-long learning opportunities that help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.”*

#### *4.4.3.6 Live Below the Line (LBL): People-oriented first, and task-oriented second*

LBL Project together with its communications, creative, media, digital, online, partnership and operations directors run one of the most successful and valuable functions of Oaktree which produced 2.7 million AUD over the last two years. Live Below the Line is also an opportunity for thousands of Australians to take action on the issue of poverty, and the campaign supports their journey through feeling disenchanted about poverty, to taking powerful action, and changing the perspectives of people around them (Oaktree, 2016). LBL highly believes in people value – which is useful for social innovation of social relationships and collaborations, therefore it is more focused on people-oriented affairs, rather than task-oriented matters. LBL strives for building a friendly atmosphere where volunteers are both taught how to master a social skill and take ownership of their tasks, therefore from the high people perspective LBL thinks only the staffs can “make or break the company”. For entrepreneurs, LBL offers interesting lessons to be active both offline and online concurrently, and valuing peoples' ideas, opinions, experiences and inputs while working together to build strategy for innovative changes in societies for the people.

#### *4.4.4 Oaktree's Strategy formulation and youth participation: Version-15 approach*

In Oaktree, youth participation by consultation, by collaboration and by leadership are prominent (Oaktree, 2016). In Oaktree's consultative participation the information provided by young volunteers is considered, in Oaktree's collaborative participation all decisions are made through a collaborative process whereby young people are considered partners in a process; and in Oaktree's leadership participation young people are leaders in an international development process when they initiate a particular process or have the ultimate decision-making power and authority transferred to them (Oaktree, 2016). All in all, Oaktree's famous “Version-15” approach bears the testimony of its heavy youth participation, meaning that from the Oaktree's layman/grassroots level (starting with draft version-1), any major document, decision, policy or strategy while reaching right up to the board undergoes at least 15 in-between rounds of consultations, reviews and discussions extensively.

#### *4.4.5 Oaktree's diversity and decision making: Dotmocracy technique*

Dotmocracy, a transparent, equal opportunity, and participatory large group decision-making technique, is occasionally used in diversified Oaktree meetings. As a simple method for recognizing points of agreement among a large number of people, participants write down ideas on specially designed paper forms called Dotmocracy sheets (or sometimes Dotmocracy walls) and use pens/markers to fill in one dot per sheet or allocation-wise as much as possible, recording respectively their levels of agreement or intensity of inclination. The result is a graph-like or maximum dotted visual representation of the group's collective opinion (Diceman, 2010).

#### *4.4.6 Oaktree's effective project impact: Public-Private partnerships*

Oaktree has partnered with Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE) on **[Project-4] “Beacon Schools Initiative (BSI)”** since 2010 which operates in a public-private partnership model in three schools in Kampong Cham, Cambodia successfully (Oaktree, 2016). The project has become a model for education reform in Cambodia with endorsements by Cambodian Education Minister and inclusion of the key program elements in the plan for national education reform. It is a highly innovative project that seeks to change the governance and regulatory frameworks of schools to provide greater access and higher quality education to poor and

marginalized youths (Oaktree, 2016). Through the model of public-private partnership, with KAPE working alongside the government, recognizing the needs to promote systemic change within the public education sector, Phase 2 (September 2014-2016) of BSI will further develop income generation activities and capacity, aiming to leave the schools in better positions to achieve ongoing economic viability, sustained attitudinal change, effective management, and inspire replication of the model following the phasing out of KAPE's support (Oaktree, 2016).

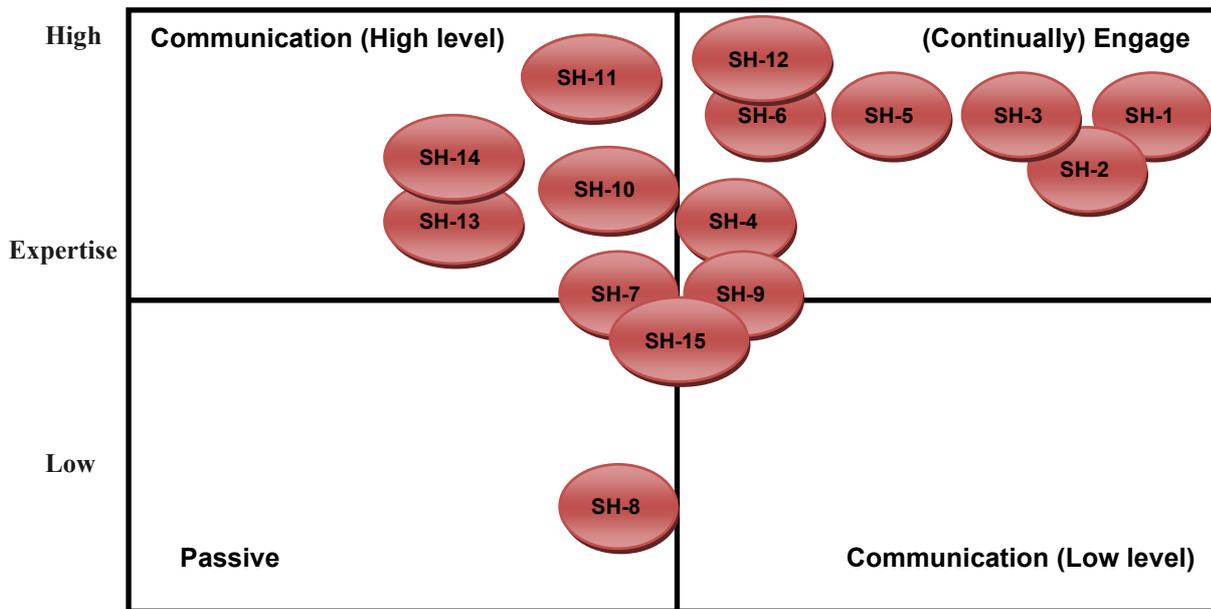
#### 4.4.7 Oaktree's organizational culture: Self-awareness approach

Oaktree with a vibrant, amicable and open for all culture offers an amalgamation of both corporate and social organizational cultures with both elements of professionalism and social relationships. With fun, flexibility and freedom, being more consultative and less directive, the culture of Oaktree is accessible, receptive and supportive to the members of Oaktree family. From a comparative perspective, Oaktree's innovative culture can also be defined as both mentorship-driven and ownership-driven learning culture with an optimum balance of mentorship and ownership, pace and peace, feedback and outcome, and overall learning and delivering where at the end of the day, Oaktree is proud of what it does. With the changing pace of the world, Oaktree is also adaptive to the changes and invites innovation in its style and equips volunteers with the needful. Again, from a categorical perspective, Oaktree's innovative culture can also be understood as combination of ambition (toward changing govt. policies), idealism (toward ending poverty in one's lifetime), useful energy (toward utilizing the youth force), and innovative strategy (toward youth-led social innovation). This innovative Oaktree culture valuing the learning curve and resolving the confidence-competence paradox, critically contributes to the overall development of the Oaktree volunteers instilling high standard of work ethics and professional habits that is evident from their post-Oaktree lives in corporations or nonprofits or nation building. In this process, the Oaktree volunteers undergo a useful sense of self-awareness.

#### 4.4.8 Oaktree's stakeholder mapping and collaborations

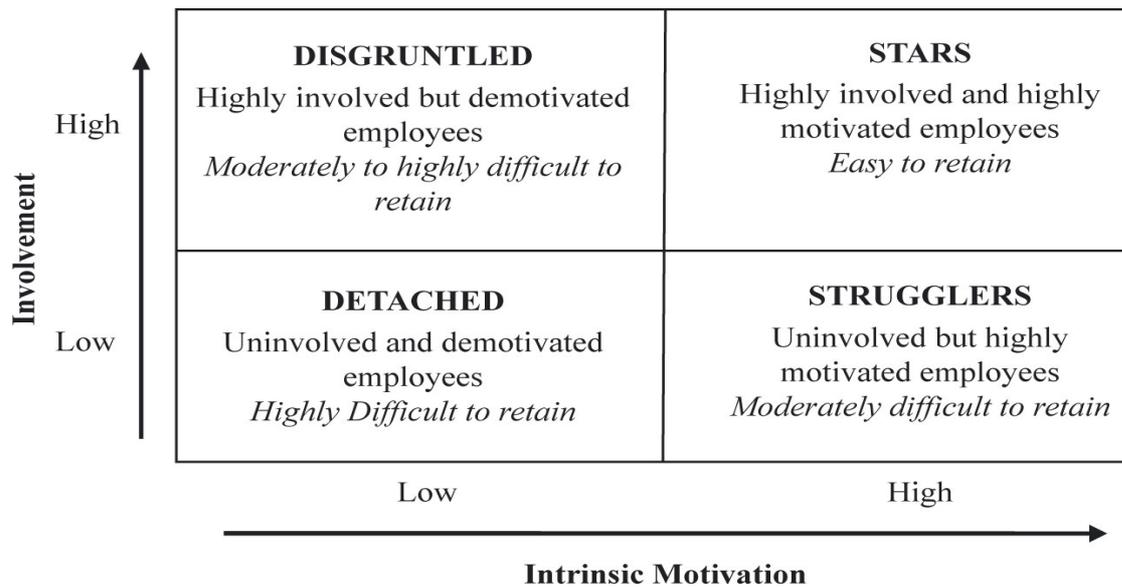
Oaktree adopts a multi-stakeholder perspective, and collaborates with an array of stakeholders from grassroots to statesmen as follows:

Oaktree Stakeholders (SH)	Expertise		Willingness	Future Value
	Contribution	Legitimacy	Willingness to Engage	Necessity of Involvement
<b>Category conceptions</b>	<b>Knowledge is of value to Oaktree</b>	<b>Directly affected by Oaktree</b>	<b>Proactive &amp; already engaging with Oaktree</b>	<b>Relatively unused/unknown to Oaktree</b>
<b>SH-1: Subcommittees</b> (chaired by board members from NGOs)	High	High	High	Medium
<b>SH-2: ACFID</b> (Australian Center for International Aid)	High	Medium	High	Medium
<b>SH-3: C4AA</b> (Campaign for Australian Aid)	High	High	High	Medium
<b>SH-4: DFAT</b> (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, including local embassies & Australian cultural institutes, e.g. Australia-India Institute etc.)	High	Low	Medium	High
<b>SH-5: Edu-partners</b> (Local educational partners, e.g. KAPE and Education and Training/HR/Youth Ministries locally)	High	High	High	Medium
<b>SH-6: IYE-partners</b> (Intl. Youth exchange partners, e.g. Prava)	High	High	High	Medium
<b>SH-7: C-partners</b> (Campaign partners, e.g. YRDP)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
<b>SH-8: F&amp;F</b> (Family and Friends)	Low	Low	Medium	High
<b>SH-9: Universities</b> (e.g. Monash, Deakin, RMIT etc.)	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
<b>SH-10: NGOs/Trusts</b> (World Vision, Care, Oxfam, Save the Children, Change, YLT etc.)	High	Medium	Medium	High
<b>SH-11: Corporations</b> (McKinsey, Cadbury Australia etc.)	High	Medium	Low	High
<b>SH-12: Volunteers</b> (all Australian states)	High	High	High	High
<b>SH-13: Alumni</b> (local & international)	High	Medium	Low	High
<b>SH-14: Media partner</b> (ABC, Herald, Huffington, blogs etc.)	High	Medium	Low	High
<b>SH-15: Intl. donors</b> (Gates Foundation, World Bank, ADB, AfDB, UN bodies etc.)	Medium	Medium	Low	High



4.5 Oaktree's Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership (YEL) Model

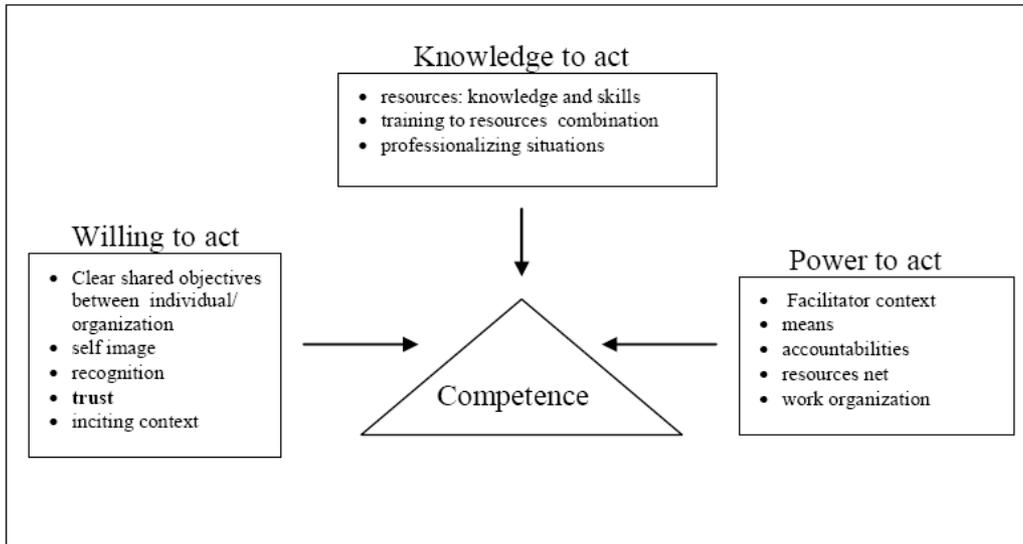
4.5.1 Underpinning classical and contemporary perspectives for Oaktree's YEL Model



**Fig. 5) Employee retention model (Sengupta & Dev, 2013; pg. 272)**

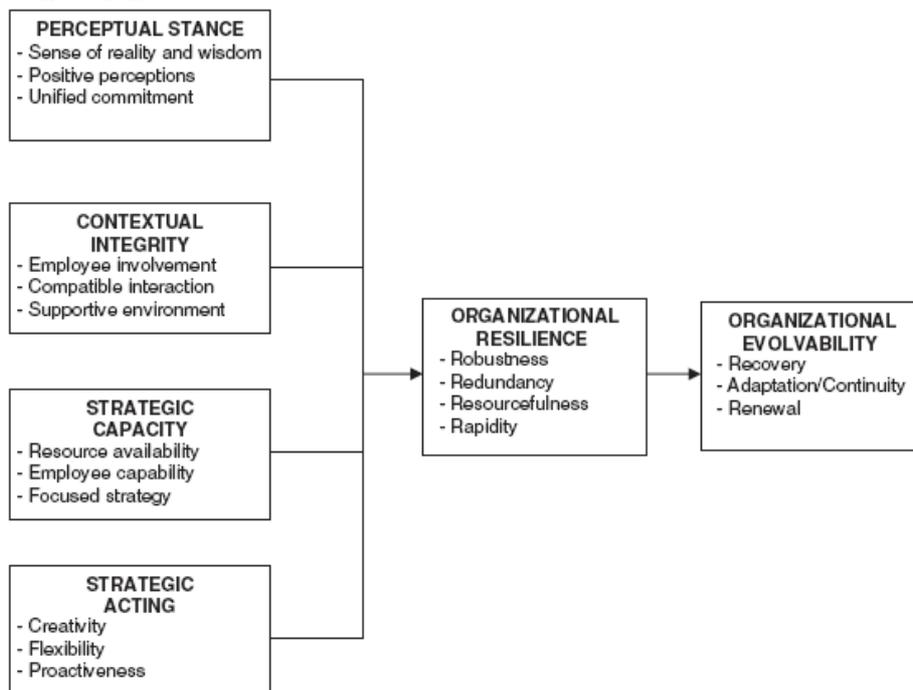
Oaktree volunteers are motivated and well-performed for the betterment of both self and societies. In this context, the model on employee retention developed by Sengupta and Dev (2013) aims to explore the dimensions of employee retention. Four job-related dimensions of willingness to stay are considered which includes intrinsic motivation factors, extrinsic hygiene factors, life interest and work compatibility factors and involvement factors which contributed to the following four broad categories of employees in organization. In this relation, “detached” employees are neither involved in the work, nor motivated to perform, hence extremely difficult to be retained. “Disgruntled” employees lack in the basic intrinsic or aspiring motivation despite being involved in the organizational assignments, hence moderately to highly difficult to be retained. “Strugglers” on the contrary, have a high degree of intrinsic motivation but lack organizational involvements, hence moderately difficult to be retained requiring to expanding their responsibilities, empowerment, involvement and engagement. “Stars” are concurrently highly involved and highly motivated in organizational affairs, and easiest to be retained thereby. It is also strengthened here that, by ensuring the retentive forces into high gear, the employers need to

make informative decisions regarding the building of their human capital. In practice, considering the Oaktree volunteers as resourceful and youthful human capital, retention of them is only possible by ensuring their high motivation and high involvement which Oaktree is able to pursue by the motivated high level of youth engagement in social welfare.



**Fig. 6) Competence development model (Fandiño & Marcos, 2013; pg. 267)**

The model on competence development as augmented by Fandiño and Marcos (2013) focuses on three dimensions: cognitive dimension of knowing how to act, relational dimension of willingness to act, and structural dimension of power to act, all three hold parallelisms among themselves in an organizational setting to constitute competence. This competence caters to the proper environment to establish relationships based on trust in different degrees and thus promotes a reconstruction process of continuous learning in the organization. The model fortifies trust as integrative part of the organizational structure that makes the relationship among organizational stakeholders sustainable. Given different organizational structures, trust within social capital is regarded as essential to ensure an environment of emotional relationships confirming the organizational social sustainability. In this context, Oaktree embeds sincere trust based social relationships within the members, volunteers, committees, subcommittees, management and supervisory boards – which inspire the Oaktree stakeholders to take actions.



**Fig. 7) Organizational resilience model (Kantur & İşeri-Say, 2012; pg. 765)**

The model on organizational resilience developed by Kantur and İşeri-Say (2012) categorizes the sources of organizational resilience as perceptual stance, contextual integrity, strategic capacity and strategic acting and organizational resilience which direct to organizational evolvability as its ultimate result. In this context, organizational resilience while developing organizational evolvability ensures the sustainable development of the organization through continuous innovation and adaptation to changing circumstances. Therefore in line with the spirit of the model, the sources of Oaktree’s organizational resilience toward the evolvability of Oaktree cover a vast area of Oaktree volunteers’ welfare due to the fact that, as per the model, these nurture the employees’ positive perceptions, involvements, capabilities and flexibilities which critically help Oaktree in becoming more resilient and adaptive to critical circumstances.



**Fig. 8) Collaboration system model (Winkelen, 2010; pg. 12)**

The model on collaboration system developed by Winkelen (2010) focuses on the inter-organizational collaboration by depicting the organization, the individuals involved, the context of collaboration and the external environmental issues those are the basis of feedback and feed-forward learning loops within an overall learning system. In the model, the contextual factors include the external drivers for participating in inter-organizational, e.g. at the organization level, access to intra-organizational collaboration mechanisms; and at the individual level, knowledge sharing behaviors and cognitive capacity factors are of paramount importance. Inside the collaboration, the intent or motivation for the collaboration and the associated outcomes are valued in line with the inter-organizational dynamics elements. Likewise, Oaktree advocates for the effectiveness of the feedback and feed-forward processes between the inter-organizational collaboration and the individual and organizational levels of the overall learning system ensuring the involvement, participation and motivation of the Oaktree stakeholders for a meaningful collaboration.

*4.5.2 Development of the Oaktree YEL Model anchored in theory and practice*

All the aforementioned elements and facets of Oaktree’s effective youth entrepreneurship and leadership, considering the relevant underpinned theoretical perspectives and practical best practices, logically culminate into the developed YEL Model of Oaktree as follows:

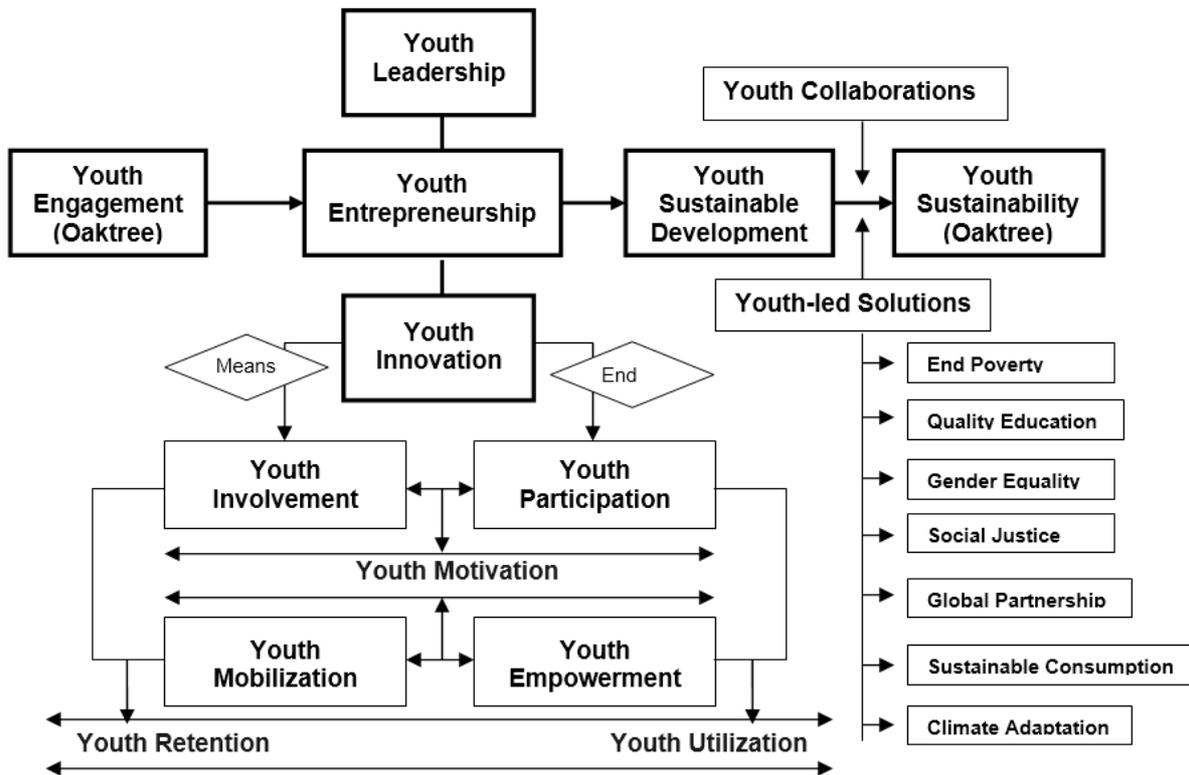


Fig. 9) Oaktree's Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership (YEL) Model [Source: Own illustration]

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendation

### 5.1 Oaktree's insightful recommendations to youth in developing countries

Based on Oaktree's best practices, Oaktree advises the same to the international youth-based developing organizations which are active in the domain of youth leadership, entrepreneurship and social innovation. Oaktree suggests when the youth practices are structured, mentorship-driven and affiliated to or supervised by sector experts, then the possibilities of success enhances than ever before. Catching up with experts, specialists, practitioners, and thus being guided by them utilizing their experiential knowledge and skills itself could be a huge resource for developing organizations in emerging economies. It is also important to value the asset and status of being youth-led, invite innovations, celebrate youthful diversity and be less formalized or directive and more flexible or consultative creating that inevitable youth space for creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and stewardship. It is also essential to be both humble and courageous not thinking one has got all the solutions of the world. Constant learning, improving oneself, supporting others and building partnership is the key to success. Not de-prioritizing people, valuing passion of others and at times stepping backward to oversee the bigger picture help in many ways in youth organizations. Overall as per the own success stories of Oaktree, being prepared for the long-term and having sustainable linkages help the organization move ahead successfully.

### 5.2 Policy Recommendations for revamping and sustaining the YEL model

#### 5.2.1 Policy recommendation-1: Reviewing and Revamping

The YEL Model of Oaktree requires from time to time review for enriching the multifaceted elements and facets of youth entrepreneurship and leadership considering the diversity of the Oaktree volunteers. It is understood from the model that youth collaborations with Oaktree stakeholders (with regard to the stakeholder mapping of Oaktree) is critical for the youth sustainability of Oaktree. Therefore considering the rating of the stakeholder mapping, the YEL model needs to be revamped in terms of further stakeholder relations and youth engagements. Again, the youth innovation segment of the YEL model is a key concentration to continuously produce youth innovation by involving, participating, mobilizing and motivating young volunteers which calls for proper retention and utilization of Oaktree members over the period of time and within the given timeframe of the volunteers overall. To further reinforce the revamping of the model, it is recommended to diversify the youth-led solutions and decentralize the organizational systems comprising of expert teams in line with UN's SDGs which Oaktree substantially pursues and ratifies as per the discussed alignments.

### 5.2.1 Policy recommendation-2: Scaling and Sustaining

For scaling and sustaining the YEL Model over the period of time, it needs to refer back to the stakeholder mapping of Oaktree and intensify the prospective areas of stakeholder development with due significance. Apart from that, across Asia Pacific region Oaktree as a unique model and success story can train the youth development organizations and youth ministries of partner countries. In doing so, Oaktree will have to undergo the extensive documentation process of the key learning, best practices, major success stories (both volunteers and alumni), documented evidences of impacts over the period of time as per the role and rule of knowledge and know-how transfer to the next generation of youths both in Australia and beyond. For sustaining the model, alternative fundraising schemes and revenue models need to be tested in Oaktree labs and incubators as pilot studies prior to scaling up and further scoping out. In this regard, without compromising the Oaktree values, to some extent commercializing the Oaktree patterns in terms of training, consultancy, advisory, supervision, R&D, capacity building, international mentorships, memberships and internships, and also extensively collaborating with financial stakeholders where the necessity remains as per the stakeholder mapping of Oaktree - is a recommended avenue for Oaktree in future for inviting more innovations and capitalizing youth force within right time, place and policy. Oaktree as a learning organization has a lot of young energy and valuable resources for the youth worldwide positioned to restore social justice, hence sustaining of the Oaktree model is best pursued by eventually scaling up the Oaktree model indeed.

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