

# Leadership for a Sustainable World

**Proceedings of the  
31<sup>st</sup> CEEMAN Annual Conference**

20-22 September 2023

Almaty Management University (AlmaU)  
Almaty, Kazakhstan

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## Leadership for a Sustainable World

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# Welcome Words



**Danica Purg**  
President of CEEMAN  
Slovenia

Dear friends,

It is a pleasure to see you all in Almaty. This is the second time that we have organized this annual conference here. The first one was brilliant, so it was not a hard decision to have it here again.

We used to think that CEEMAN was founded amidst a chaotic situation in Central and Eastern Europe in 1993. But now the chaos has become even greater. In 1993, we were able to create understanding and friendship between nations, institutions, and people. It was a very positive process and a feeling that things could only get better. It is great that you are here today despite the violent conflicts, disasters caused by climate change, and growing tension even between former friends. Today, you are the new pioneers in the effort to contribute to the mission of CEEMAN. We have always called ourselves pioneers because we started developing management in Central and Eastern Europe. We were small at the outset but then we became a very large association. We are no longer responsible for just Central and Eastern Europe. We now cover all so-called dynamic societies. I have the feeling that we are back to the pioneering stage.

The title of our conference can be a pragmatic question. What can CEEMAN do to bring institutions and people together again as in 1993? We, the CEEMAN board and AlmaU decided to look ahead and think what kind of leadership the world needs for a sustainable future. And what does this mean for our mission and for all leadership development institutions? If you tell people that climate change is actually a crisis of leadership, they will look at you in surprise. But this is a fact. And we, at management development institutions, can help a lot.

The financial crisis changed the world, and we concluded that it was a leadership crisis, especially in an ethical sense. Today, we see a large number



of armed conflicts. Meanwhile, the climate crisis has grown and spread. I am not the first one to state that we are experiencing what I already mentioned: a leadership crisis. We have to ask ourselves how it is possible that our institutions, which have a unique opportunity to develop a sustainable mindset among business leaders, are failing to produce the right people for creating a better future. They come to us to learn and develop. Do we not have the right programs for them, the right education, and the right educators?

I am convinced that we are going to have a great conference with highly professional, wise, and committed people. Therefore, I am sure we will take a step forward in our mission to develop further and deliver responsible leadership and management development education.

I wish you a great conference. I am very thankful to the president, Assylbek Kozakhmetov, and his team, who helped us organize this event. We are happy to be in Central Asia as we believe that we can do a lot together. I am happy to meet all our friends from all over the world. We have almost 100 representatives of 25 countries here. I am sure that we will do a lot of very useful networking and will create new friendships and relationships. Thank you very much.

### **Assylbek Kozhakhmetov**

Founding President of Almaty  
Management University and  
Vice-President of CEEMAN  
for Central Asia

Kazakhstan



Ladies and gentlemen,  
Distinguished guests,  
Fellow scholars,

Welcome to magnificent Almaty, at the heart of Central Asia, a testament to nature's grandeur with its majestic mountains, framing a vibrant city. Our history and modernity converge in harmony and pulsate with life and culture.

Today, we are here, on the premises of AlmaU, established in 1988. Our 200 faculty members and 5,500 students are celebrating our 35th anniversary this year. We educate not just minds but also hearts. In our continued pursuit of excellence, we have launched the School of Transformative Humanities and embarked on a journey to establish ourselves as a comprehensive first class university. This reflects our commitment to holistic education, nurturing internal growth, as well as empathy and global citizenship.

I am glad to announce that we will be hosting an anniversary celebration in December, after 35 years of an exceptional journey. We invite you all to join us in that journey of education and transformation. It will be an occasion to reminisce about our achievements, envision our future, and celebrate

the spirit of innovation and collaboration that defines us.

AlmaU has been a steadfast and proud member of CEEMAN since its very inception, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to the advancement of management education in our region. We have become a beacon of knowledge for Central Asia. Our synergy with CEEMAN is nothing short of remarkable. In 2015, we hosted the Annual CEEMAN conference and our participants still vividly remember that event. Back then, we discussed topics such as leadership, globalization, and localization in dynamic societies. Today, we have gathered once again to discuss the latest trends in leadership and management education and to do so with a profound focus on sustainable development. That is a monumental change that transcends borders and impacts every country, institution, and individual.

Due to political shifts across the world, Kazakhstan has become pivotal in the global landscape. This region is a fast-growing market. Ours are dynamic societies with immense potential and we are proud to be part of this progress. The world is looking at us and it is our responsibility to shape our future.

You have come from all over the world to engage in a fascinating dialogue. We are going to discuss the advancement of sustainable development, the nurturance of leadership, and the collective shaping of our shared future. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Danica Purg, CEEMAN's president, and to all of you, my dear friends, for your unwavering support. Many thanks to the dedicated teams of CEEMAN and AlmaU who worked tirelessly to make this event possible, and to our speakers and other contributors. I express my special gratitude to our sponsors and other supporters. You are helping us continue on our journey toward excellence.

To close, I extend my warmest wishes to all of you for a fruitful and stimulating conference. What is important is not just the knowledge that we share, but also the spirit of unity and collaboration that defines us at this moment. Together we share a commitment to make a true difference in the world of management education and sustainable development. And remember that we hope to celebrate AlmaU's 35th anniversary in December. See you then.

## Yerkin Tatishev

Founder & Chairman of Kusto Group, Chairman of AlmaU Board of Trustees Kazakhstan

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,

It is difficult to give a speech after all the good words and wishes that we heard from the previous speakers. I welcome you to Almaty. It is a pleasure to see you here, for all our team and for me personally. I am glad that such a nice conference is being hosted here.

CEEMAN emerged in Central and Eastern Europe, a place where we now have the biggest armed conflict since the Second World War. It is taking place in Eastern Europe but it is affecting all of us, including Kazakhstan and all of Central Asia. That is an outcome of the political tension between the world's greatest powers. That influences us, too. Kazakhstan is in the middle of Eurasia and we feel this tension quite acutely.

I have just come from a conference attended by a large delegation from a Chinese province that has an economy of two trillion US dollars. That is 10 times more than Kazakhstan's gross domestic product. Also, there is a meeting taking place in New York right now, with the participation of the five Central Asian countries, hosted by President Biden.

It is now common to talk about artificial intelligence. This challenges us, the business school educators, who are producing mostly white-collar jobs. Previous transformations, such as automation and digitalization, were focused mostly on blue collar jobs but now it is our turn. How to adapt to this development is a major issue for AlmaU and, I am sure, for all of you. Therefore, I love the title of this conference: "Leadership for a Sustainable World". The area where humans can still compete successfully against artificial intelligence is leadership. This is the area where we need character and soft skills, such as understanding of emotions. Artificial intelligence is everywhere. It can even create art. Still, I believe in human potential, especially that of the next generation. These are interesting topics that should be discussed during these two days.

CEEMAN, with Danica Purg at the helm, has been doing a great job since its foundation. It has become a large and strong organization, with many members from many countries, not just those in Central and Eastern Europe. Likewise, under Assylbek's leadership, AlmaU has done a great job, establishing itself as a leader in business education in Central Asia. Now, we have to think what our university is going to do in the next 10 or 15 years in this region. Where are we going and why? What are we, all CEEMAN schools, going to do in the current political situation in the world around us? The greatest strength of this conference is the opportunity that it provides for exchanging ideas. We can help each other build new programs. Being together gives us power. This is one of our natural strengths that helped us in the past and it is our most important asset for the future. By discussing our problems, we can find joint solutions. If we cannot find solutions, politicians are even less likely to do so. We need to produce the right leaders for this world, so that they make the right decisions for a sustainable, friendly, and open world. It should also be more transparent and more productive in terms of good relationships between people, institutions, and nations. I believe that it is our responsibility to work toward this goal. Working together, I am sure that we will find the right answers.

Thank you very much.



# Introduction



## **Gulnara Kurenkeyeva**

Rector of Almaty Management  
University, AMBA & BGA the  
International Accreditation  
Advisory Board Member  
Kazakhstan

Good morning, dear guests. A very warm welcome to all of you to the 31st CEEMAN Annual Conference.

You saw an inspirational artistic performance a while ago and we have prepared more for you during these two days. We have gathered here for a transformative event at the heart of Eurasia. As the host and conference chairperson, let me briefly share some information about the host institution. For 35 years, Almaty Management University has been a beacon of learning and innovation, dedicated to the formation of future leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the rapidly changing world. We have 5,500 students and about 400 faculty and staff members. We offer programs from foundations of business management to doctoral studies, including MBA and DBA programs.

AlmaU has been a member of CEEMAN since its inception and we have continually supported the vision that CEEMAN has for the development of education in dynamic societies. This is the second CEEMAN conference that we have hosted. We are proud of being a CEEMAN member, benefitting from the networking opportunities that the association provides. We have CEEMAN accreditation.

Seven years ago, at the CEEMAN conference in Almaty, I gave my first speech in English. It was a challenge but I managed it and now I give speeches all over the world. I would like to thank Danica Purg, CEEMAN's president, for the endless inspiration and support to us: to our university and to me personally.

Today, our conference agenda is very promising. It is a rich agenda, spanning diverse aspects of leadership and sustainability. On behalf of the host institution, I extend our heartfelt thanks to our esteemed partners and contributors, speakers, moderator, and sponsors: all those who have made this event possible.

The topic of this conference is leadership for a sustainable world. It has an immense significance in today's global context, emphasizing the critical role of leaders in addressing sustainability challenges. We have about 100 participants from 25 countries who have come together to provide valuable insights and ideas for collaboration that will inspire us to take action to achieve a more sustainable future.

In the next two days, we are going to listen to renowned keynote speakers who will talk about the building blocks of a sustainable world. We have distinguished business leaders and deans and directors of management schools from the whole world. Our panels will focus on sustainability in Central Asia, exploring the regions unique perspectives and focusing on best practices. All of this is very important to Central Asia at the moment. The five presidents of our countries are attending a meeting in New York, together with the US president. This means that the interest in, and focus on, this region is growing. I hope that our conference will set an agenda for management education in all Central Asia. We are going to discuss how management education organizations can address the evolving needs of organizations in today's dynamic world. You will hear reports from experts in the field.

During the second day, we will cover topics such as responsible research, curriculum sustainability, and the role of data and artificial intelligence in the achievement of sustainability growth. Our conference will provide great networking opportunities. We will exchange ideas on how to join our efforts to shape a better world.

Our team has made a great effort so that you all can have a memorable experience during these two days. I thank all participants for their contribution.

### **Vlastimil Samek**

Representative of the United Nations Department of Global Communications & Head of the United Nations Information Office Kazakhstan



Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

It is good to see you here in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on this very special day, the 31st annual conference of CEEMAN, devoted to a very significant topic: leadership for a sustainable world.

It is an interesting coincidence that 31 years ago, Kazakhstan joined the United Nations. The Sustainable Development Goals Summit has just concluded in New York. The United Nations is convening a General Assembly to discuss human rights, gender equality, and of course sustainable development.

Our distinguished host, AlmaU, was one of the first universities that joined the United Nations Academic Impact Initiative. I would like to stress the importance of this endeavor to all of us.

The United Nations Organization would like to have a closer cooperation with the academic world, and this includes management education, since we educate young people. It has become fashionable to use the word “sustainable”. You hear it from left and right. But do people really understand what it is about and how important it is for their future?

You are those who should help people understand what their future is going to be. If we talk about successful business, we should also talk about responsible management.

A successful business without responsible management is just utopia. I do not like to talk too much. I always prefer informal conversations. As a concluding remark, I would like to thank you all for being here today.

You are the people creating the sustainable future and bringing it closer to us. You are those who will produce the real impact.

I am glad to be here with you.

Thank you very much.



# Building Blocks of Sustainable World

Keynote

**Michael Crow**

President of Arizona State  
University

USA



I am going to talk about the responsibility of those of us who are involved in the designing of sustainable business schools. First of all, we need to be aware of the fact that our present design - no matter if we are in the United States, Central and Eastern Europe, or Central Asia - may not be adequate. The future is aspirational and one of the most important issues for our future is to build a relationship with our clients. Whatever we design may impact that relationship.

In classic economic theories, there is no mention of the natural environment in a context other than its exploitation, that is its wealth generation capabilities. Now we have to take a close look at ourselves and redesign ourselves. We need a sustainable relationship with what we are dependent on. We are using raw materials in a way that can have a long-term impact on future generations.

There are people in the United States who define themselves as “libertarians”. They believe in individual freedom, small government. But that amounts to believing that the current generation has the right to reduce the liberties of future generations by depleting the natural assets of the planet to sustain liberties and choices.

We are building a school of sustainability, a school for innovation and society, and a school of complex adaptive systems. We are setting up a school for the future of the oceans. We have built 15 research centers. This is a 200-million-dollar-a-year research project, launching algae-based energy technologies and carbon-capture technologies. We are thinking about redesigning cities. Every university should be doing this. The objective for all of us should be to architect intellectual enterprises at our educational institutions, so that they are of the greatest potential utility in the future.

What is the perception of sustainability at US academic and government institutions? People are beginning to realize that we need a new system. We need a new economy. We continue to use carbon-based fuels, but we need new transportation systems, agricultural systems, and water systems.

Today a US company paid a billion US dollars for a carbon-capturing technology which will directly remove carbon from the atmosphere. Businesses and government are working together in this area.

My second question is what it takes for leaders to keep up with the sustainable development goals agenda of the United Nations. All private and government institutions should be pursuing these clearly articulated objectives related to sustainable development. That means development without wrecking the system on which we are all dependent. We are now the most powerful species on the planet, altering its entire system. What does it take for academic leaders to start thinking about this?

Next question. What opportunities arise for universities in the context of the sustainable development goals? They seem unlimited: new programs, new courses, new training. Here in Arizona, a startup received 100 million US dollars of venture capital and all they are going to do is accounting for carbon. They will monitor who produces it, how much it is worth, and how it can be traded. These are opportunities that did not exist 10 years ago. The opportunities are unlimited. Those universities that do something about that right now will be the successful ones in the future.



Keynote

**Mette Morsing**

Director of Smith School of  
Enterprise and the Environment,  
Oxford University

UK

It is a huge honor for me to be invited to this CEEMAN conference. In the past three and a half years, I worked for the United Nations as the head of the Principles of Responsible Management Education project. To achieve the goals of that project, we need to think more about the skills that we need to bring to the classrooms. We educate 220 million people every year. What do we teach them to advance our agenda? How do we help them make the right decisions when they become decision-makers? We need to focus much more on sustainable development so that our students design the right policies. We have to think more about the future of the planet. This means a stronger focus on society and on systems thinking. It is not enough to be an expert in a silo discipline. It is not sufficient to be a good accountant or marketing expert. You have to be a leader indeed.

As educators, we have to make the idea of sustainability, climate change, and betterment of the planet an integral part of the thinking of our students. They need to be able to think critically and make informed decisions. This is important because there are urgent challenges that need to be addressed. We see large-scale environmental disasters happening all over the world. We need to think of ways to address those catastrophes. We have to contribute to that collectively.

Thank you very much. I wish you a very productive conference.

## Janez Škrabec

President of Riko d.o.o.

Slovenia



Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to be standing in front of you today, among outstanding minds promoting new management models, approaches, and solutions for tomorrow. Since the very start of my career, IEDC has inspired me to be passionate and take innovative approaches as a manager and leader. That innovative international school of management in my country, Slovenia, has a far-reaching impact on the wider region, thanks to its founder, Danica Purg, who is also president of CEEMAN. That association is the best promoter of sustainable leadership. I continue to find myself at the very center of the world through its conferences and seminars bringing together prominent and influential people from international business and science, philosophy, and art. Thank you, Danica, for having broadened my management horizons, sparking my professional interests for three decades. This has been valuable guidance against ignorance, intolerance, narrow-mindedness, lack of empathy and vision, and perhaps an inflated ego. I am truly looking forward to getting new insights at the CEEMAN conferences and I am convinced that my own leadership paradigm will help me deal with the current challenges.

I have been leading the Riko company for over three decades. We started as an ecological equipment supplier, and today we are an engineering company specializing in green and digital transformation with a firm base in Slovenia and abroad. Every contact with academic expertise has added value to Riko, along with important further guidance and development incentives. Education and training encourage us, sharpen our skills, and help us identify opportunities. It provides theoretical insights and practical support.

Now, if you allow me, I would like to present a couple of examples, illustrating the value of academic effort for sustainable development. First of all, I have become a more responsible leader. The late Peter Drucker provided the best definition of a leader: before anything else, you need to be able to manage yourself in order to manage others. You have to set objectives and know how to achieve them. You have to know your strengths and weaknesses. That is what a manager must think about all the time. You must never rest on your laurels, while being a source of trust and hope for all your employees. That is what a leader should be like according to Manfred Kets de Vries, an expert in leadership and organizational behavior.

I am also grateful to Nancy Adler for additionally strengthening my belief in the significance of the value of art and culture by highlighting the im-

portance of business people, managers, and leaders. Knowledge of arts and culture sharpens our diagnostic and prognostic skills. Our scholarship program for outstanding students of linguistics strengthens the social importance of the native language.

We began developing our greatest businesses upon the ruins of a collapsed economy. Today, we are a big player in this region and we increasingly include Slovene and European companies in our projects, providing access to international customers. Following our entrepreneurial intuition, we never joined the rush to global markets. All these efforts have provided important added value and opportunities for further social development. We are building success on regional, rather than global, ambitions. Our business opportunities are mainly in South and Eastern Europe. This is consistent with Pankaj Ghemawat's views who says that the global market is an artificial construct, whereas the real markets are regional. Our combination with historically, culturally, and linguistically related markets is well founded. I am convinced that because of that, we will also be able more easily and successfully to transfer our environmental expertise and experience also to Kazakhstan, which has invested a lot of resources in the modernization of its infrastructure.

Riko's business model has been inspired by the switch to a green technology. Fifteen years ago, during the global economic crisis, at the time when everybody was questioning our views, I had the honor to attend a talk by Nobel prize winner Paul Krugman. In that unforgettable evening, I asked him what, according to him, was the key technology that would start a new cycle and pull the economy out of the recession. His immediate answer, without any hesitation, was "Green technology". That short and clear answer impressed me. Since then, Riko has been active in environment protection and energy engineering. Krugman provided a clear answer to the common question of how people can contribute to the improvement of society and formation of socially responsible individuals. As a businessman, I started focusing on green, environment-friendly technologies. I strive to create sustainable products and business models with the smallest possible carbon emissions. In addition to the great business opportunity, this makes me happy because I know that my business is creating a record of social responsibility.

In all these years, the region that we operate in has become greater, greener, and faster in its pursuit of production of carbon-free energy. It now takes better care of its water resources and manages its waste better. I do not want to be boastful but I would like to think that our company has contributed to this process. We have worked with many waste water treatment plants and have helped them find efficient use of renewable resources, including the promotion of wood-based construction.

Dear participants, I am honored to have been able to share some of my insights that underscore the significance of your efforts for our sustainable development. What is now carried out in practice, was initially born as a vision or an intellectual reflection. In today's society, our communication is highly diversified. Credible institutions and conferences, like yours, guarantee fresh content, high-quality knowledge, and fast and complex connectivity. Over half a century ago, US physicist Thomas Kuhn argued that new scientific theories are generated by crises and lead to a paradigm shift. Today, we face various obstacles. Political instability and economic insecurity have undermined our established practices and knowledge of the world. I firmly believe, and I think that so do you, that now is the time for radical change. As Einstein once said, we cannot solve our problems with the same kind of thinking that created them. Without fresh ideas and social responsibility that is not possible. To paraphrase the president of

Kazakhstan, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, we have an obligation to protect the safety and well-being of the citizens. We have to act as effectively as possible. If we wish to create a more sustainable world, we have no other choice. The cultivation of young leadership talent addresses this need. By accepting this great responsibility, you are opening people's eyes to the amazing complexity of our world.

I am certain that we will enjoy this CEEMAN event as well as Kazakhstan's hospitality. In this country, you can see breath-taking architectural and natural sites. And it has great perspectives for a better future. Thank you.

**Abdurasul Yusupov**  
CEO of Team University  
Uzbekistan



Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It is my honor to address this audience. I would like to thank Prof. Danica Purg for this kind invitation, as well as Mr Kozhakhmetov and his whole team for the organization of the conference. They have done a great job getting us all here to discuss sustainability issues.

There are two paradigm shifts in the international development discourse that have happened in recent years. The first one was the belief that national prosperity is limited to economic growth, measured in terms of increased gross domestic product. Consequently, it was believed that we all need to focus on economic development rather than other spheres of our life. It turns out now that this approach is totally irrelevant. All the available empirical evidence shows that it is wrong. We have to understand that there are other spheres that also need to be taken into account. These include schools, education, and healthcare. All this research has resulted in a human development index. Since then, we have changed our concept of national well-being and prosperity. The relationship between gross domestic product and poverty reduction was considered strong. But it did not work. The problem was that many economists believed that it was enough to focus on growth to achieve development goals. In other words, economic growth was not considered just a means but a final goal. But with the passage of time it became clear that economic growth cannot be considered an ultimate value.

The recognition of this fact came against the backdrop of social and political instability and widespread poverty across the world. In fact, empirical evidence suggests that living conditions can get worse no matter how well a country is doing economically. Scientists started wondering if national prosperity is really limited to economic growth. That was the time when the concept of human development came on the stage and radically challenged



conventional wisdom and our understanding of well-being and poverty. The human development index gives a composite assessment of human progress in terms of health, education, and gross domestic product. It was introduced in the first Human Development Report in 1990 and since then has been published annually.

Poverty is now understood as deprivation of the capability to live a good life. Therefore, the advocates of the capability approach proposed a new way to fight poverty. For instance, efforts to reduce poverty in the past would focus first and foremost on gross domestic product growth. But empirical evidence shows that gross domestic product has no strong correlation with life expectancy. For a long time, the main challenge has been to stop believing that human development is a luxury that can be afforded only by the rich countries. The experience of the East Asian countries is a case that proves the opposite. Access to education and healthcare in that part of the world improved long before widespread poverty disappeared. This allows us to speak not so much of the social consequences of economic reform but of the opposite: the economic consequences of social reform.

We need to think in a similar manner when talking about sustainability. Thanks to the Sustainable Development Goals program of the United Nations, we know that this is a very complex matter. It is not just an environmental issue. We have to be aware of the fact that sustainability does not simply mean environmental protection. There is also social sustainability and economic sustainability. Of course, environmental sustainability is the core. But it is not the only one. In our country, when we mention sustainability we think first of all of the environment: protection of the natural ecosystem. Unfortunately, that is not enough. It is not the only way to think of sustainability. I think that we need a public awareness campaign. We should teach people to think of sustainability in a broader way, just as we did that with respect to national prosperity and well-being. It is our duty to educate people, especially our students, and make them realize that sustainability is a very complex issue. And we have a lot of indicators of sustainable development goals.

I would also like to bring another issue to your attention: economic growth. There is a school of thought that argues that sustainability clashes with economic growth. The sustainable development goals include poverty reduction, schooling for everyone, and access to health care, which is very good. But we should not forget that economic development can clash with these goals. This is what we are experiencing these days, especially in the very developed countries.

So, what can we do? Multinational companies have a clear vision that they announce on their websites. This is something that we lack in our region. We talk about sustainability but we do not have indicators and do not know where we are going. For example, large companies in developed countries announce that by a certain year, they will produce zero waste or will achieve carbon neutrality. I like these specific promises. This means that they have at least started thinking about these issues. Unfortunately, we have not seen this in our part of the world yet. I would like to see more of our companies being responsible and visualizing the future. They have to think how they can contribute to environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

I have a question for all of you: distinguished faculty, administrators, and business people. We like to say that education is the answer. We believe that we should invest in education. But can education really help in this regard? What do you think?



## **Answer from the audience**

Education can help but we need a new culture as well. We are too orientated toward consumption. People value new products. They are striving to have more and more. The speaker from the university in Arizona also seemed to be intent in creating an economy that is based on a high level of consumption. We actually need to reduce consumption. Maybe that is why it is so exciting that we have European leaders here. In Central and Eastern Europe, there is an effort to convince people to agree to consume less. Maybe that is what we need today, but it is going to require a huge educational effort. We need to create a new culture so that people think differently about consumption. We need people to live in a new world that does not destroy itself.

## **Abdurasul Yusupov**

I see this somewhat differently. We all have sustainability in our curriculum and we are educating our students. But the problem is that we are progressing too slowly. What can we do to accelerate the progress? This is a curriculum problem. The problem with the sustainability courses at our university is that they employ a formal approach. We need a more innovative approach. We teach sustainability because we need to do so. International organizations tell us that we should do it and we obey. But we are not producing good results.

## **Comment from the audience**

We teach the broad picture about sustainability. But what about the details? We still teach finance as we did decades ago. I think that it is very difficult for educators to change their teaching methods if they have been successful in the past. I think that many of us struggle with these details. That is our huge task. Can education change things? Yes, definitely. But we have a huge challenge: to change the basics of what we are teaching. That is at least what I think.

## **Arnold Walravens**

Professor at IEDC-Bled School of Management

Slovenia

Thank you very much for these introductions. I learned a lot this morning. I was very impressed by the statement about the need for a holistic approach. I will give you a small example. The Dutch government tells me that it would be better if I did not eat meat every day and that it is good to buy biological food although it is quite expensive. At the same time, the same government is subsidizing the use of fossil energy to the extent of 47 billion euros. There is a contradiction in these policies. What I do personally is a drop in the ocean compared to what we need to do.

Yesterday, CEEMAN's president said that we are experiencing a leadership crisis. I think we need better leadership indeed.

# Sustainability - The New Wave in Central Asia

**Aigerim Kaumenova**

Vice Rector for Global Partnerships at Almaty Management University & Chair of the UN PRME Chapter Eurasia

Kazakhstan

This panel discussion revolved around the significance of sustainability and responsible management education in Central Asia. Some insights were shared within the context of the United Nations' initiative, PRME. It was founded in 2007 with the aims to transform management education globally and create responsible decision-makers for sustainable development.

The panellists were experts with diverse backgrounds. They emphasized the pivotal role of education in the region's development. They highlighted the need for responsible management education, embedded in teaching, operations, and societal engagement. The discussion explored the challenges and opportunities faced by universities and management schools in Central Asia, urging them to play a leading role in advancing sustainability.

The conversation delved into various dimensions, including the importance of localized engagement through PRME chapters, the international dimensions of sustainability intersecting with Central Asia's efforts, and the global trends and innovations in responsible management and sustainable development that Central Asia should be aware of. The panelists shared examples of collaborations and emphasized the need for continuous innovation and ideation to address the challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of sustainability.

The discussion underscored that sustainability is not merely a new wave but an ocean into which Central Asia is diving. The panelists were encouraged to continue their efforts, bring in new ideas, and leverage platforms like the CEEMAN annual conference to foster sustainable development. Gratitude was expressed to both the panelists and the audience for their valuable insights and contributions.

Some highlights are provided below.

## **Dinara Seijaparova**

Country Manager of UN Global Compact in Kazakhstan & Member of AlmaU Board of Trustees

Kazakhstan



My personal sustainability journey started in my childhood, when every spring my classmates and I collected used paper, books, and newspapers for recycling. My father had a subscription to almost every paperprint magazine and newspaper available out there and so by spring we had piles and piles of paper. My classmates and I went knocking on doors in the neighbourhood and around the city. It was a quest full of fun. But on a more serious note, my sustainability venture began in 2015, where the United Nations approved the sustainable development goals, and the presidents of 193 countries expressed a commitment to attain these goals by the year 2030. I was then invited to join the Sustainable Business Commission, formed in Davos during the World Economic Forum. The commission was chaired by Mr. Paul Polman, the then CEO of Unilever, a multibillion consumer goods company, and Lord Malloch Brown, the former UN deputy General Secretary under Kofi Annan. The commission consisted of 30 top business and political leaders and academics. It worked to understand the implications of the 17 sustainable development goals for business. Everyone wanted to know how the sustainable development goals would impact business profitability since, as you know, the main purpose of business is profit maximization. And what we found was astonishing. The sustainable development goals are not a charity but a great opportunity for business people and entrepreneurs. The sustainable development goals provide a 12-trillion-dollar market opportunity, including a circular economy, renewable food systems, and more. And in fact, the world's trillion-dollar companies, such as Tesla, Uber, Airbnb, one way or another already include at least one component of the sustainable development goals. Last year I fully committed to the Sustainability Agenda in Kazakhstan by becoming country manager for the United Nations Global Compact — the world's largest initiative under the United Nations, represented in 166 countries. It unites more than 20,000 companies, with 90 million employees, around the world, and AlmaU is one of them. Thank you.



### **Brendan Duprey**

Founding Director of Sustainable Kazakhstan Research Institute and Associate Professor in Sustainable Development, Narxoz University  
Kazakhstan

I have always been interested in nature and the environment. When I was five years old, I was a boy scout. I enjoyed going outdoors, hiking, and camping. When I was 14 years old, a friend of my father's realized that I was interested in the environment and gave me a book which shaped my professional career. The title of the book is well known: Limits of Growth. After reading the book, I was shocked by the things that we are doing to the natural system. I wondered why everybody is driving cars and throwing plastic trash out every day. What is that doing to the environment? What is it doing to our planet? When I was 15 that really hit home to me: that there are limits to development and that what we were doing was impacting us. Obviously, anything that we do to the environment will impact us since we are part of it. That was what I think shaped my career.

I remember reading about the development goals in 2000. Most of you know about them. I started thinking about how those things are interconnected. The previous speaker talked about health, education, and poverty reduction. All of these are interconnected.

In 2006, I was a Peace Corps volunteer and I went to Bulgaria to work for the European Union Integration Department. I thought, "I am from America and I am going to teach them how to live sustainably as I have a college education in that". They put me in a small rural community with 6000 people in it. We worked on small projects for sustainable development. I saw how people lived there. They had their own gardens in the backyard. They had their own vegetable patch and conserve vegetables in jars for the winter. They had their own chickens. Everything in the village was next to each other. The municipality was next to a coffee shop. Everything was within walking distance. I thought, "My God! I come from the United States with this sustainability education but I live way less sustainably than these people in this rural community. So, I started thinking that sustainability cannot be achieved by just producing new technologies. It also requires reduced consumption.

Sustainable development values, skills and knowledge must be integrated holistically into the higher educational curriculum through an institutional approach to SD. This means incorporating sustainability into the formal educational process through standardized learning objectives and outcomes across curricula, formal teacher training, University evaluation criteria and didactic materials like textbooks and lesson plans.

### **Aigerim Kaumenova**

Do you have any thoughts on the importance of sustainability in Central Asia and its implications for the region's future?

## Dinara Seijaparova

The importance of sustainability in the Central Asian region must not be underestimated. Although I could mention at least 20 advantages, for the sake of time management I will focus on the three that are most important in my view.

The first one is geopolitical significance. Central Asia's strategic location makes it a vital player in the geopolitical landscape and a focus of global powers. To be a strong player in the global arena, the Central Asian countries need to strengthen their regional cooperation. They can do that through sustainability efforts — by addressing common challenges, such as water disputes and environmental degradation, reducing the potential for conflicts. Embracing sustainability can also enhance the region's diplomatic standing. This is exemplified by the initiatives of our president, Mr. Tokayev. At the UN General Assembly that is taking place now in New York, he restated his proposal to set up a regional sustainable development goals hub in Almaty that would focus on promoting sustainable development goals in Central Asia.

The second is economic development. Sustainable development practices can lead to economic diversification, job creation, and poverty reduction. Sustainable development projects can help increase foreign direct investments to the region, enhancing its investment attractiveness.

The third advantage is better quality of life. The sustainable development goals include poverty and hunger elimination, sustainable health practices, such as clean water and sanitation, sustainable education and infrastructure, clean energy, and gender equality. If the Central Asian region achieves all these, it could certainly have longer life expectancy, and a healthier and happier population. That could reposition the region for long term growth, stability, and prosperity. And let me emphasize the opposite: failure to adopt a sustainability path will lead to increased temperature levels, which will impact Central Asia even more than the rest of the world. Temperatures are projected to increase by three degrees by the year 2100. This will lead to more climate disasters, heightened regional tensions, hindering development prospects with far-reaching consequences for the region and beyond.

## Haifeng Huang

Distinguished Professor at Changzhou University, Co-Chancellor of China Institute for Responsible Management Education and Sustainable Development, Global Co-Founder of Ecological Development Union International

China



I am Haifeng Huang, outgoing global member of PRME Steering Committee in this year. I am pleased to be here today because, like many other scholars, I deeply care about sustainable development goals and PRME, and I am keen to see the world's positive change and great impact in

the near future. I also hope to see business schools and companies take immediate and ambitious action after the 2023 sustainable development goals summit.

The achievement of a successful career relies heavily on the support of various institutions, particularly the public sector and international organizations, as well as academic institutions. Since 2008, I have collaborated with numerous esteemed scholars, policymakers, and entrepreneurs, both domestically and internationally, to establish the Ecological Development Union International in Australia. In my role as the head of the Asian region, I have placed significant emphasis on poverty alleviation and ecological education as part of the sustainable development goals.

With three years of contribution and leadership positions by PRME China Chapter, along with extensive experience across the world, I possess the necessary skills to contribute to the effective running and expansion of the organization. My vision involves establishing partnerships with multinational corporations, training institutions, and social organizations to expand responsible management education's reach.

In China, I collaborated with esteemed scholars to establish the China Economic Transformation Research Center and the Beijing Ecological Development Union International Environmental Technology Research Institute. As the director of these institutions, I possess extensive project management experience spanning over 10 years. My expertise primarily revolves around overseeing circular economy projects implemented by multinational corporations in China and coordinating Sino-Germany sustainable development cooperation projects.

As a professor at a business school, I have over 20 years of teaching experience, but I believe that it is necessary to gather the forces of all sectors of society to promote sustainable development. I have seen positive trends during our 20 years of development, such as the previously poor rural areas becoming prosperous, the polluted environment being greatly improved, and all sectors of society benefiting from such changes. The achievement of a successful career relies heavily on the support of various institutions, particularly the public sector and international organizations, as well as academic institutions.

### **Aigerim Kaumenova**

As the country manager of UN Global Compact in Kazakhstan and member of the AlmaU board of trustees, how do you think the universities and management schools should act to have a leading role in advancing sustainability?

### **Dinara Seijaparova**

I am a graduate of Stanford Graduate School of Business, and I would like to share first what my Alma Mater does in the area of sustainability. In fact, it is one of the first universities in the world that set up a sustainability school that is made up of a community spanning collaborators across Stanford University and the world, all dedicated to cultivating deep knowledge and high-impact solutions to pressing planetary challenges. This is done with the understanding that sustainability issues have become so complex that they require not only technological solutions but also deep research, and reshaping of policy and current practices.

To answer your question from the position of country manager of the UN Global Compact, I want to share what the UN Global Compact does to educate its participants, and perhaps universities and management schools



can take that as an example. First of all, we provide a huge educational platform that shares best lessons and practices of successful cases of our participants. We also enable those companies that have successfully tackled sustainability goals, to speak and lead at the events that we organize on frequent basis: forums, conferences, and form coalitions where they can share their ideas and experience. It is very important to be able to share, connect and lead. And third, our experts provide regular trainings and accelerators available mostly to UN Global Compact participants where companies learn from the UN experts how to establish science based sustainable development goals targets, how to monitor them, develop internal documents, and report.

And to answer from the position of a member of the board of trustees of AlmaU, I would like to share an example of how AlmaU is implementing all this today jointly with the UN Global Compact. AlmaU provided two lecturers who will be trained under the supervision of our experts and later will be given an opportunity to lecture UN Global Compact participants. Through this interchange, AlmaU faculty gains the necessary skills under supervision by UN Global Compact experts and can take this knowledge further, so as to share it with its students.

### **Question from the audience**

What are the international dimensions of sustainability, and how do they intersect with Central Asia's sustainability efforts?

#### **Serhat Burmaoglu**

Dean of Faculty of Economics and  
Management, Kyrgyz-Turkish  
Manas University

Kyrgyzstan



Sustainable development requires joint efforts to build an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future for humanity and the Earth. To achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to coordinate the three core elements: environmental protection, social inclusion, and corporate governance.

Our world needs leaders — people with the vision, determination, and knowledge required to make a positive and meaningful difference in all areas of society. As you know, Central Asia's business schools are where leaders are developed and inspired. Of course, they need to share their knowledge within a global network.

The international dimensions of sustainability are multifaceted, encompassing global efforts to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic disparities, all within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These dimensions are inherently interconnected, with actions in one part of the world often having ripple effects

elsewhere. In the context of Central Asia, a region characterized by its unique geographical and socio-political landscape, these global sustainability efforts intersect in several critical ways.

Firstly, climate change poses a significant challenge to Central Asia, a region already grappling with issues like water scarcity and desertification. International efforts to mitigate climate change, such as the Paris Agreement, are crucial for the region. Central Asia's participation in these efforts not only contributes to global emission reduction goals but also attracts international support and technology transfer, aiding local sustainability initiatives.

Secondly, Central Asia's rich biodiversity and unique ecosystems link it to international conservation efforts. Initiatives like the Convention on Biological Diversity involve Central Asian countries in global biodiversity strategies, which is vital for protecting the region's unique flora and fauna. This also brings in international expertise and funding, aiding in the conservation of critical habitats like the Aral Sea basin.

Furthermore, the region's economic development is increasingly tied to sustainable practices, influenced by global trends and foreign investment criteria. International financial institutions and investors are progressively prioritizing sustainability, impacting the way in which Central Asian countries approach infrastructure development, energy production, and even agriculture. This shift encourages the adoption of sustainable practices, aligning local economic growth with global sustainability standards.

Lastly, Central Asia's strategic location as a bridge between Europe and Asia places it at the heart of initiatives like China's Belt and Road Initiative. This positions the region as a key player in sustainable transport and energy networks, linking it to broader efforts to create more sustainable global trade and transit routes.

### **Aigerim Kaumenova**

Serhat, please explain how your institution, Manas University, addresses sustainability related matters? You told me that sustainability in the artificial intelligence era is a big thing to discuss. So, can you please explain the opportunities and threats for higher education institutions in Central Asia?

### **Serhat Burmaoglu**

Certainly. Manas University, like many higher education institutions in Central Asia, is increasingly recognizing the importance of integrating sustainability into its framework, especially in the context of the rapidly evolving artificial intelligence era. This integration presents both opportunities and threats.

On the opportunities side, artificial intelligence and related technologies offer powerful tools for advancing sustainability in academic settings. We incorporate artificial intelligence and sustainability into the curriculum for preparing students for the future job market, where these skills are increasingly in demand, thereby enhancing the institution's educational relevance and appeal.

However, these opportunities are accompanied by threats. One significant threat is the digital divide. As artificial intelligence becomes integral to sustainability efforts, there is a risk of widening the gap between institutions with access to cutting-edge technologies and those without. This divide can hinder collaborative efforts and knowledge sharing, which are crucial for addressing global sustainability challenges. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological change demands continuous adaptation in curricula and

teaching methods, which can be resource intensive. There is also the ethical dimension of artificial intelligence. The university must ensure that its use of artificial intelligence aligns with principles of equity and fairness, avoiding biases that could undermine sustainability efforts.

## **Aigerim Kaumenova**

Moving on, I have a follow-up question to all of you. What are the global trends and innovations in responsible management and sustainable development that Central Asia should be aware of?

## **Serhat Burmaoglu**

The global trends and innovations in responsible management and sustainable development are rapidly reshaping the way in which organizations and regions approach sustainability. Central Asia, with its unique environmental, economic, and social contexts, should be particularly aware of several key developments.

The first one is the circular economy. This model emphasizes the reduction, reuse, and recycling of materials to minimize waste and promote sustainability. Central Asia could benefit from adopting circular economy principles, especially in industries like mining and agriculture, which are prevalent in the region. This approach not only addresses environmental concerns but also creates economic opportunities through new business models and job creation.

The second is renewable energy technologies. With the global shift toward renewable energy, Central Asia has significant potential, particularly in solar and wind energy. Harnessing these resources can reduce dependence on fossil fuels, mitigate environmental impacts, and provide sustainable energy sources. Innovations in energy storage and grid management are also crucial for maximizing the benefits of renewable energy.

The third development are the sustainable agriculture practices. Given the region's strong agricultural sector, adopting sustainable agriculture practices is vital. This includes precision agriculture, which uses artificial intelligence and Internet of Things for efficient resource use, and regenerative agriculture, which focuses on improving soil health and biodiversity. These practices can enhance food security while reducing environmental impacts.

The next trend is green finance and impact investing. There is a growing trend in global finance toward supporting environmentally and socially responsible projects. Central Asia should tap into green bonds, impact investing, and use environmental, social, and governance criteria to fund sustainable development projects. This shift in investment patterns can provide the necessary capital for large-scale sustainability initiatives.

Digitalization for sustainability is also important. Leveraging digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data, and blockchain can significantly enhance sustainability efforts. These technologies can improve resource management, enhance energy efficiency, and enable transparent and efficient supply chains. Central Asia's growing information technology sector positions it well to adopt these technologies.

With rapid urbanization, sustainable city planning becomes crucial. This includes green building practices, sustainable public transport systems, and urban green spaces. Innovations in smart city technologies can help Central Asian cities manage resources more efficiently and improve the quality of life for residents.

Climate change adaptation and resilience is another necessity. Developing

strategies to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change is a global priority. Central Asia, facing issues like water scarcity and desertification, needs to focus on building climate resilience through sustainable land and water management and disaster risk reduction strategies.

Finally, investing in education and training is essential to equip the current and future workforce with the skills needed for a sustainable future. This includes integrating sustainability into educational curricula and promoting lifelong learning opportunities.

For Central Asia, staying abreast of these global trends and innovations is crucial for sustainable development. It involves not only adopting these practices but also adapting them to local contexts and needs. By doing so, the region can address its unique sustainability challenges while contributing to global efforts.

### **Aigerim Kaumenova**

Haifeng, as someone from outside this region, with a rich experience in building sustainability, please share the perspective of the China Institute for Responsible Management Education and Sustainable Development. What are the challenges for institutions to pursue the sustainability agenda?

### **Haifeng Huang**

Over the past decade, I have been actively engaged in international conferences supported by PRME on numerous occasions. In 2020, I had the honor of being elected board member of the PRME Steering Committee and global member of the PRME Nominations and Governance Committee. This has afforded me regular participation in global conferences organized by PRME and a valuable role in shaping relevant policies.

Recognizing the importance of responsible management education, I was selected as an advisory board member of The I5 Project of Learning in Leadership Education (the Impact Five). Collaborating with renowned scholars from both domestic and international backgrounds, I co-founded the Chinese Academic Committee for Responsible Management Education in 2021. In addition, I served as the inaugural chairman of PRME China Chapter from 2021 to 2022.

Are business schools delivering on the value they promise? Do we cultivate business talents who can adhere to corporate social responsibility? The enormous challenge is to overcome the problems brought about by different political systems, cultural biases, and historical conflicts, and effectively strengthen communication and cooperation in the international community.

It is necessary to establish partnerships between multinational enterprises and business schools, nurturing responsible leaders. Using the experience of excellent institutions, you can enhance teaching quality and contribute to Central Asia's economic growth.

In China, I have always been an advocate of the idea that business should contribute to the development of society. The commercial economy is very important and an important pillar in promoting social and economic development. However, only business behavior that is in line with sustainable development can contribute to the healthy development of human society.

So I totally agree with UNGC's motto: Business as a force for good. By committing to sustainability, business can take shared responsibility for achieving a better world .

## **Aigerim Kaumenova**

Summing up our discussion, what would be the key lessons that you want to highlight so that we all give some food for thought to our audience?

## **Serhat Burmaoglu**

There are several key lessons that stand out, offering valuable insights for our audience.

The first one is the need for interconnectedness of global and local actions. The discussion highlights how global sustainability efforts are deeply interconnected with local actions, particularly in regions like Central Asia. This interconnectedness underscores the importance of collaborative, cross-border approaches to sustainability, where local initiatives are informed by and contribute to global goals.

The second is the role of technology in sustainability: The emergence of artificial intelligence and digital technologies as pivotal tools in advancing sustainability is a critical point. These technologies offer immense opportunities for enhancing efficiency, enabling innovative solutions to environmental challenges, and preparing the workforce for future demands. However, they also bring challenges, including ethical considerations and the risk of widening the digital divide.

The third one is adaptation to regional specificities. While global trends in responsible management and sustainable development provide a framework, their successful implementation in Central Asia depends on adapting these trends to the region's specific environmental, economic, and social contexts. This adaptation is crucial for addressing local sustainability challenges effectively.

Next, I would mention the importance of education and capacity building. The role of education in fostering a culture of sustainability cannot be overstated. Integrating sustainability into educational curricula and promoting life-long learning are essential for equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate and contribute to a sustainable future.

The shift toward investment in sustainable practices - such as green finance and impact investing - is also a significant trend. Central Asia's engagement with these financial mechanisms can provide essential capital for sustainable initiatives, driving both environmental and economic benefits.

The need for strategies to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, especially in vulnerable regions like Central Asia, is urgent. This requires climate change resilience. Building it through sustainable land and water management and disaster risk reduction strategies is crucial.

The circular economy is the path forward. Embracing the principles of the circular economy can lead to more sustainable resource use and open up new economic opportunities, particularly in sectors dominant in Central Asia.

In conclusion, these key lessons emphasize the multifaceted nature of sustainability efforts. They call for an integrated approach that combines technology, education, regional adaptation, and international cooperation to address the complex challenges of sustainability in the modern world, particularly in dynamically evolving regions like Central Asia.

## **Dinara Seijaparova**

I am impressed by all the work that is being done at the moment by governments, business, academia, civil society, and ordinary citizens. However,

that is not enough. We are still very late behind achieving the sustainable development goals. In fact, if we continue our current consumption and our lifestyles at the current pace, we need 265 years to close the gender gap. We bear the cost of wars and violent conflicts that is estimated at eight percent of the global gross domestic product. Bribery and corruption cost humanity two trillion dollars each year. Today, a billion people go to bed not knowing whether they will wake up tomorrow or not because of being hungry. In the developed world, another billion are suffering from the largest ever epidemic of diabetes and obesity. The cost of implementing all sustainable development goals is about five trillion US dollars, and here we are spending twice as much on wars and bribes. What are we doing now, are we insane? So here is the key lesson that I want to give as food for thought for all of you. I am sorry if some of you will not be able to sleep after that. We should stop living and consuming at this pace as if we had three planet Earths. We do not have even two planets. We have only one, and if we want to survive, all of us must act now.

## **Aigerim Kaumenova**

Serhat, how do you organize teaching sustainability at your university?

## **Serhat Burmaoglu**

There are several applications that we have embedded in our university regarding sustainability.

The first is curriculum integration, which means embedding sustainability concepts across various disciplines. This could involve revising existing courses to include sustainability components and creating new courses focused specifically on sustainability. For example, business courses could cover sustainable business models, while engineering programs might include sustainable design and renewable energy technologies.

The second is offering interdisciplinary programs. We develop interdisciplinary programs or courses that bring together students and faculty from different departments. Sustainability issues often intersect with multiple disciplines, such as economics, environmental science, sociology, and political science, offering a richer, more comprehensive educational experience.

The third is experiential learning. We incorporate hands-on learning experiences, such as fieldwork, internships with sustainable businesses or non-government organizations, and community service projects. This approach helps students understand the practical application of sustainability concepts.

The fourth is research and innovation. We encourage and facilitate research in sustainability. This could involve setting up research centers dedicated to sustainability, offering grants or funding for sustainability research projects, and fostering partnerships with industry and government agencies for practical research opportunities.

The fifth is the campus as a learning lab. We use the university campus as a living laboratory for sustainability, implementing sustainable practices in campus operations, such as energy efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable food systems, and using these initiatives as teaching and research opportunities.

The sixth are sustainability competencies. We focus on developing key competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, ethical reasoning, and collaborative skills. These are essential for addressing complex sustainability challenges.

We invite guest lecturers to speak to students at workshops in various



sustainability fields. This could include practitioners, academics, and representatives from the public and private sectors.

Next, we focus on global and local contexts to ensure that the curriculum addresses both global sustainability challenges and local or regional issues. This is particularly important in areas like Central Asia, where local environmental, social, and economic contexts may differ significantly from global ones.

We use online resources and blended learning, including online educational resources, such as massive open online courses, webinars, and virtual simulations, to complement traditional classroom learning. This approach can provide students with access to diverse perspectives and resources.

Finally, we emphasize student engagement. We foster a campus culture that values sustainability by supporting student-led initiatives, clubs, and organizations focused on sustainability. This not only enhances learning but also encourages students to put their knowledge into practice.

### **Question from the audience**

Can you please elaborate on the latest initiatives of UN Global Compact in Kazakhstan?

### **Dinara Seijaparova**

I would like to mention two of our most recent initiatives. First, last week, we launched the Central Asian Advisory Committee that is represented by highest-level government officials, UN resident coordinators and chief executive officers of large companies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This initiative aims to unite the business sector behind the implementation of sustainable development goals not only in Kazakhstan but in the whole Central Asian region. We are also launching a six-month sustainable development goals accelerator in October. With the assistance of Almaty faculty, as I mentioned before, we will train the business sector on how to set up scientifically based targets for companies, how to monitor performance, and how to incorporate sustainable development goals into strategy and internal documents.

# What Organizations' Needs Mean for Today's Management Schools



Moderator:

**Irina Sennikova**

Dean of the Faculty of Business  
and Economics, RISEBA University  
and Vice President of CEEMAN

Latvia

The session was conducted in the World Café format, the main purpose of which was to engage the conference participants in several rounds of small-group conversations, so that they could express ideas, share their organizational experience, bring together multicultural perspectives, and together plan for the future.

The discussion was focused on three main questions:

1. How do we know what organizations' needs really are?
2. What can we do to ensure that companies understand the value of sustainability and the urgency for change?
3. How can we ensure that our present educational design is adequate for a sustainable future? What do we need to change in our approaches?

The participants actively engaged in the conversation addressing crucial questions related to the alignment of management education with the evolving needs of organizations.

It was emphasized that business and management schools should constantly conduct thorough research on industry trends, market demands, and emerging business challenges and stay alert about global economic, social, and technological developments. Business educators should actively engage with industry leaders, professionals, and other stakeholders for valuable insights. Surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with

organizational representatives will help understand their current and future needs. Ensuring continuous feedback from alumni, internship programs, and partnerships with businesses would allow educational institutions to stay attuned to the dynamic needs of organizations.

Business education institutions should act as thought leaders by conducting and publishing research on the business case of sustainability. They should encourage publishing not only in academic journals but also in professional ones, which business leaders would read. This will help raise awareness and influence corporate perspectives on the urgency of sustainable practices. Establishing partnerships and collaborations with sustainable businesses and organizations can facilitate a mutual exchange of knowledge.

Management schools should regularly review and update their curricula to incorporate the latest developments in sustainability, ethical business practices, and social responsibility. They have to ensure that courses reflect the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental factors. A shift should be made toward experiential learning approaches, such as case studies, simulations, and project-based assignments, to provide students with practical insights into sustainable business practices. Interdisciplinary education is becoming of utmost importance as well. It encourages collaboration between business schools and other academic disciplines and helps students develop a holistic understanding of the complex challenges associated with sustainability. Another important issue is faculty development. Providing training and support for faculty to stay current with trends in sustainability and encouraging faculty members to integrate sustainability concepts into their teaching and research is of vital importance.

In summary, addressing these questions involves a combination of research, stakeholder engagement, curriculum development, industry collaboration, and a commitment to ongoing adaptation in response to the evolving needs of organizations and the imperative for sustainable practices.

# CEEMAN

## Responsible Research

**Xiaobo Wu**

Director of National Institute for Innovation Management, Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, Zhejiang University, CEEMAN Vice-President for China

China

As we all know, responsible research is very important not just to CEEMAN. This morning, we are going to have four panelists here. Peter McKiernan is professor of management at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland. He will join us online. Dorota Dobija is professor of accounting, PhD program director, and head of the Department of Accounting of Kozminski University in Poland. She will also be talking online. Haiying Lin is professor at the Arizona State University, Hainan University, and at the Arizona State University Joint International College in China. She is also founder of PRME China. Finally, Janpolat Kudaybergenov is rector of Kimyo International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The idea of responsible research in management was launched decades ago. So, it is not a new issue. But everything related to it is getting more interested, not only for academics but also for practicing managers. They do need this research because they have to understand social development better.

Peter and I have been involved in this movement for credible and useful research in the business and management disciplines for a long time. This is now becoming increasingly important. Our panelists will present their ideas on this.

We have developed seven principles for Responsible Research for Business Management. I will not address them one by one. But they are all important. A week ago, we had a video conference on these issues. It was mentioned that responsible research necessitates coordinated action by all relevant stakeholders.

In China, the government requires a report on sustainable development goals from all public listed companies. So, there is growing concern about these issues. These include environmental concerns and new governance. Some people here are familiar with the PRME project and its goals, and are actively participating in its activities. Most business schools address those issues.

At CEEMAN, we have been discussing these topics for years. A couple of years ago, we launched a Manifesto. We acknowledged the gap between research, teaching, and practical issues. I would therefore encourage all CEEMAN members to read the manifesto again. But even more, we need also to take action on its principles.

The first part of this panel will be devoted to the question of “why”. Why should we do responsible research? What is the motivation behind this? We will have questions and answers. Next, we will discuss the “how” question. How do we do what we need to do? Finally, we will talk about what we want to achieve in the future.

That was my introduction. Now I give the floor to our panelists.

### **Peter McKiernan**

Professor of Management at  
University of Strathclyde  
Scotland



Good morning. Thank you very much for this opportunity to address this audience. Thank you, CEEMAN and AlmaU, for having us here today.

I am delighted to speak about responsible research: the objectives, the developments and the challenges. First of all, a word on the objectives. Basically, what was happening in business and management research in the 1990s was a development toward pure science, as people rushed to get published. A great deal of research was produced that was not really applicable in business management. The work of academic engineers is very important to practicing engineers. But management researchers were writing books and articles that were read mostly by their peers. That created a vicious circle: we did things for ourselves and for our own promotion. Our movement was founded to correct some of those issues. We developed seven principles. One set of principles addresses science and insists on honouring both basic and applied research in terms of plurality and multi-disciplinarity of what we have to do as social scientists.

The second part of those principles addresses the engagement that we have with stakeholders, for example business managers. There may be other stakeholders, such as city councils and other institutions. We need to engage those at the very start of our research, rather than just disseminate our results to them at the end. That would be a way to have them fully engaged all the way through in our research process.

We have come quite a long way since we started seven years ago. We have achieved some significant things, especially with regard to younger researchers. I will talk more about this as I speak later on the panel. Young researchers have no agency. They have no power. But they are entering the

world that we created. It is a world full of rankings and ratings, and citation chasing. It is a metrified world, full of metrics. This thinking is deeply rooted and is one of our major challenges. How do we engage with editors and deans of schools? How do you engage with them so that we change this situation, so that people do just good research, rather than keep chasing metrified objectives that have brought us to this situation?

RRBM has 10,000 US dollar scholarships for research students who have espoused our principles in their theses. We have had over 70 webinars over eight years to help them understand our principles better. We have professional development workshops at our annual conference for junior scholars and they are very popular. We have a lot of short courses prepared and some being prepared that they can access. Perhaps one of the most important things that we do is that we have a so-called rock-and-roll group. It is a band consisting of three female singers plus myself. I am the only male singer on the band. We go around different universities in Central and Eastern Europe and India and give a whole day seminar on how to do responsible research. It is free of charge. We do it also by video so that it can be recorded. In India, we work with the faculty all day long. That is something that we offer to the community in order to promote our principles. There are a number of issues with Western-based principles in less-developed countries and we pay attention to that.

Thank you very much.



### **Dorota Dobija**

Professor of Accounting, PhD  
program director and Head of  
the Department of Accounting at  
Kozminski University

Poland

I listened to Peter very carefully talking about responsible research principles. I fully agree with him, but I would like to put this in a different perspective. I was vice-rector for research and faculty development for many years until I became a researcher. My view is that research starts with curiosity. If we are curious, want to learn something, and are interested in an issue that we want to investigate, we do research. The main goal of research is not publication. Publication is the final product. At the outset, we should not even be thinking about it.

When talking about research, we need to talk about research projects, networking, and multi-disciplinarity. That is something that we need to rethink at our institutions. As Peter mentioned, we are under pressure by accreditation institutions to improve our standing in the publication rankings. In our part of the world, we are trying to catch up with, and stay at the same level as, the researchers in advanced countries. But we need to pay more attention to the basic question of why, in the first place, we do research.



## **Haiying Lin**

Full Professor at Arizona State University, Hainan Uni/Arizona State University Joint International College (HAITC)

China



I will use my own experience with responsible research and share some thoughts. I used to teach at University of Waterloo and Northern Illinois University and tenure pressure forced me to focus on research and teaching. After tenure I came back to teach at my home town in Hainan University. I am able to play a more important role and create stronger social impacts in my current position. I am more social-purpose-driven rather than paper-driven, integrating local resources and network to build an ecosystem involving Industry, academia and research as a whole. My team has both academic scholars (graduate students and professors) and practitioners (entrepreneurs). The extension of classroom towards the field and the guidance from the entrepreneurs enable my students to have more vivid and diverse learning experiences. The practitioners bring great ideas, insights and challenging social problems to the research team. Theory and practice feeds into each other and the integration of teaching, research, and entrepreneurship enables us to conduct action research and address more compelling research questions. In addition to drafting papers, we develop consultative reports for governmental agencies and industries, with an aim to stimulate policy dialogues and introduce more advanced standards to the field. For example, Professor Wu just mentioned the sustainable development goals and the ESG (environment, social and governance) training that we can provide to the industry. With the new carbon regulations in the EU markets, the export-oriented companies in China need to develop infrastructure or management system to capture and neutralize their carbon footprints If they plan to export goods to the European market. This trend and policy change will open new market and job opportunities. We try to tap into these opportunities in our teaching and training. I am trying to think like an entrepreneur, figuring out how my teaching can be more opportunity-driven and be able to connect my students with these new opportunities.

My students are also getting more engaged. After bringing them to my project sites in the coastal villages, they learned to use different perspectives to explore means to tackle local social problems.

I am thankful of this session that allows us to reflect our roles as academia and how we will assess our performance. Do we just count paper publication or consider a more sustainable way to bring stronger social impacts, conducting responsible research, and tackling compelling sustainability problems.



## **Janpolat Kudaybergenov**

Rector of Kimyo International  
University in Tashkent

Uzbekistan

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the staff of AlmaU and CEEMAN for organizing this wonderful conference and giving me an opportunity to give a speech here. The topic of this conference is very interesting and timely. I would like to make a couple of points based on the current situation in Uzbekistan.

Our university was established in 2018.

So, we have been in existence for just five years, and we are still learning from our partners. Research is one of the main priorities of our university, just as it is for our government. Our government has set several targets for our country. One of them is to maintain a gross domestic product growth of at least five percent each year, and become one of the 50 most developed countries by 2030, and one of the top-30 by 2050. Since the Middle Ages, Uzbekistan has made strong efforts in science development. There were many medieval scientists living in Central Asia, and especially in Uzbekistan. Many of them have contributed to the development of global science. These include Avicenna, one of the founders of modern medicine. There were also great mathematicians and astronomers. This testifies to the strong scientific potential that we have in Central Asia.

Supporting science is a very important agenda in Uzbekistan. We have special legislation on that and it is even mentioned in the constitution. We have 100 academic institutions, 65 research institutes, and an Academy of Science, with dozens of research institutes and state museums. In 2022, the ministry of higher and secondary education was transformed into a ministry of higher education, science, and innovation. We understand that it is impossible to reach our goals for the future without research, innovation, and trained scientists. The government is planning to involve the young generation in scientific research. It has a concept of science and research development for the period until 2030. One of the main goals is improvement of the science management system. At the moment, the development of science within the current system is such that we have a number of problems and obstacles, which is producing a negative impact on science and research development in Uzbekistan.

The government now expects clear outcomes through an emphasis on innovative research, and the introduction of the new system in the economy and its development. We know that science and research are important, but funding is still low compared to that of other countries. It is two percent of our gross domestic product. This means that the government knows that science and research are necessary, but on the other hand, financing it is problematic. Without sufficient financing it is very hard to achieve the targets for innovation and research.

The government is monitoring how the funding is spent and sometimes there is tension between the controllers and those who spend the funds, since science does not always bring positive results. It also generates negative results and sometimes there are no results at all. In that case, there may be problems related to the use of the state funds.

Uzbekistan is number three in Central and South Asia, after India and Iran, in terms of research results according to international sources. India's research results have a good impact on the development of its economy, whereas the impact in Uzbekistan and other countries is smaller. We gained our independence from the Soviet Union 30 years ago, but some problems in the science management system remain, such as excessive formalization, lack of interest, and no connection between education and scientific institutions on one hand and the real business sector on the other. But the most serious problem is that there are not enough young people willing to do science and devote their lives to that endeavor.

We understand that the development of research and science is very important for the development of the country's economy and for the attainment of the government's targets. Although we were established only five years ago, we are developing our research laboratory, and it is one of the largest in the country. Thank you very much.

### **Xiaobo Wu**

In your opinion, what can motivate people to do responsible research, especially in business and management, and especially in Central Asia?

### **Janpolat Kudaybergenov**

We wish to be among the most developed countries in the world but that is impossible without science and research. And we need responsible research to achieve that goal, not just any kind of research. We have to create a new way of thinking in the young generation. We do not need to invent the bicycle because it already exists. We want to integrate with international research teams. We want to learn from their successes and mistakes. By doing this, I think that we can make our research more responsible.

### **Danica Purg**

**President of CEEMAN**

I am very grateful to Peter McKiernan for his role in the quest for responsible research. Each time he comes to us to help us, we appreciate his support a lot. The first time was in China. He spoke about the critical importance of responsible research. I am also thankful for the contributions of the other speakers on his panel. Thank you, Janpolat, for telling us about the situation in Uzbekistan, which is situated so closely to Kazakhstan. That is why we are here: to learn. At CEEMAN, we would like to pay much more attention to research. It is only through research that we can be excellent and relevant to our societies. In that way, every lecturer who goes to a classroom will be able to use research-based evidence. That will help society develop.

We have another goal as well: to promote the countries of the less developed part of the world. Sometimes we go to different international meetings and that creates the impression that we do not exist. Within CEEMAN, we have to help each other in all the respects that I mentioned, and research is becoming increasingly important. The idea is not to do research just for the sake of research, like "l'art pour l'art". Our goal is to achieve change through research. Thank you very much.

### **Xiaobo Wu**

Now, we move to the second part of the panel, which is devoted to the

“how” part. How exactly do we promote responsible research? My understanding is that this can be done differently in different locations. Let us have our panelists tell us about the effective ways of doing responsible research from their viewpoint.

### **Dorota Dobija**

I am grateful for this opportunity to discuss how responsible research can be done but I must confess that I do not know of an easy solution. I just have some thoughts about it. For me, a publication is a contribution to a discussion around a topic. Thinking about responsible research is thinking about problems that surround us. There may be local problems that are not of interest elsewhere. It is a different perspective that may not be suitable for an international journal. This means that we need to ask ourselves what we would like to contribute. To what kind of discussion? What is more relevant to us? Of course, the immediate answer is that we are interested in regional issues. For that reason, we need to think if we really have to push researchers to publish in top journals. Or do we need to change our mindset and accept that contributing to a regional discussion and developing journals that promote such a discussion is what we really value and encourage our people to strive for. This is my first thought.

The second thought that I would like to share is that in order to contribute to a discussion you need to know what the world is discussing. As I listened to the presentation on the state of affairs in Uzbekistan, it occurred to me that we have the same problems in Poland. And there are similar problems in many places around the world. For example, our ministry of education decided to stop the financing of access to international databases of academic journals. So, how can we, the researchers, contribute to an international discussion if we do not have access to it?

### **Assylbek Kozhakhmetov**

Founding President of Almaty Management University and Vice-President of CEEMAN for Central Asia

Kazakhstan

Thank you very much, dear panelists, for these very interesting discussions. I would like to ask some questions that may represent a bridge to the next session. First, what is the relationship between responsibility and sustainability? And is it up to researchers or ministries of education?

### **Peter McKiernan**

Thank you for this intellectually stimulating question. I think I can answer it from an academic perspective. That would be a generic answer from the perspective of a global citizen. Clearly, doing responsible research has a number of components. It is not just responsible in terms of looking at the quality of research and its impact. On the impact side, academics have a responsibility to a number of different stakeholders. We have local, national, regional, and global interests in the sustainability of what we are doing. If we look 10 or 20 years down the line, we will realize that some of our universities may not be functioning. Not simply because of artificial intelligence but because we have not sustained the planet as much as we would like to sustain it. Some places will just be too hot to study. And some places may not even exist because of rising sea levels or because of a lack of water. So, we have a responsibility as social scientists to look at the quality of the sustainability research that we pursue. Therefore, responsibility and sustainability go hand in hand. It is like one foot goes and then the other one goes in front.

## **Haiying Lin**

Thinking about more impactful research for top journals, it has occurred to me that we can collaborate and produce research devoted to our countries. Right now, publications in the leading journals focus on North America. We can do comparative studies across different locations. Perhaps, scholars from different nations can form a large research team and work together. Some of the topics can be big data or artificial intelligence, or governance. For example, Chinese governance is different from that in the West. I have been wondering how cutting-edge research can be produced in that way and I would like to hear opinions from the senior scholars here.

## **Xiaobo Wu**

We are concerned about sustainability but there may be different types of understanding of it in different parts of the world. Different nations are at different stages of development. They may be facing different challenges and that may give them different perspectives.

## **Christoph Stückelberger**

Founder and President of Globethics

Switzerland

I have a question for Rector Kudaybergenov. I think that what you said is very interesting and encouraging. You want to enhance your innovative research. But what is the benchmark? Do you want to use the American benchmark? Or are you more likely to consider specific Central Asian possibilities? I was really impressed by the medieval scientific achievements on the territory of present-day Uzbekistan that you mentioned. I imagine that you can develop something that you can call your specific contribution. You do not have to run behind American or West European scholars. You can use your own perspective on contribution. This has to do with the issue raised by professor McKiernan and professor Dobija: the question of journals and rankings. How about an alternative ranking system for universities? We know that the current ranking is biased. It does not provide a good benchmark. We need an alternative and there are a number of people around the world working on that. That includes the journals. Twenty years ago, I found an online library providing access to those who do not have the money or infrastructure necessary to use global databases. We need alternative forms of access.

I think that the world is going in a good direction. I read recently that China now has more articles in top-ranking academic journals than the United States. This is astonishing news but it is actually a logical development. It demonstrates a global shift in the academic world. Through CEEMAN, we can all contribute to more inclusive global research and we can develop alternative rankings.

## **Janpolat Kudaybergenov**

You brought up an interesting issue. I would say that Uzbekistan wants to create a local Central Asian benchmark in the long run. Our history indicates that we have good scientific potential. We have experienced two renaissance periods, including scientific development, taking place on the territory of Central Asia. There were scientific centers in Samarkand, Khiva, and Bukhara. The government is now developing the concept of fundamentals of the development of a third renaissance following the example of our ancestors. This will be based on a new concept of scientific research development. There are many ancient libraries in our country. Recently,

more than 100,000 ancient books were found in the basement of a building. Now the government is building an Islamic Center for Civilization. I think that all the research that we produce will result in a new renaissance.

### **Dorota Dobija**

I have talked to a lot of colleagues around the world, and I see that there is understanding that the planet is not going in a desirable direction because of the lack of sustainability. I know that there are universities that are no longer using official metrics. They allow their researchers to choose those publication outlets that they consider important, depending on the discussion that they want to contribute to. This is something that I would like to see happening also in our part of the world. Of course, colleagues involved in management research may wonder how we measure quality. Our academy has a system based on peer evaluation and our researchers do not need to publish a specific number of articles in specific journals.

I would also like to raise another issue. It is more technical and has to do with predatory journals. While preparing for this session, I used some tools to see what is being published in our region, and I saw that there are many publications coming from CEEMAN universities who publish primarily in predatory journals. This forum may not be the right place to discuss this issue, but I have to tell you that some of those predatory journals are on the list of the ministry of education. We need to make a clear statement that the mission of those journals is not to contribute to an academic discussion but to make money.

### **Xiaobo Wu**

This is a very critical question. It has to do with theoretical research but even more so with practice. Benchmarking and responsible research, that is always the key, especially for developing nations. In China we have been discussing this question for many years. I think that the performance of every institution and every academic person should be measured. But what is the relevant key performance indicator? We try to measure up to the leading institutions and nations. But how related is that to our current programs and to the societal questions that we need to tackle? That is the key issue.

Time flies and we have to address our last part: the “what” question. What is our main concern and the main target? I would like to ask our panelists to share their views on that.

### **Peter McKiernan**

Thank you for asking this question. As we start thinking about our concerns for the future, we can think about this in terms of different categories. I have chosen to look at this in terms of global mindsets. Much has been said today about that topic, both in the questions and the answers to them about the sort of system that we have, which prevails, especially in the West. Everybody on the panel and in the audience knows that things are not always the same in the West and everywhere else. So, what are we doing about these global mindsets?

First of all, we are starting to work closely with deans across the world. In many business schools, a dean’s job is probably the most precarious of all because they are trapped between powerful chancellors or rectors and staff who are desperate for promotion. The dean’s job is in a sandwich, with pressure coming from two sides. We are now working with the deans, trying to get the recruitment and retention and tenure activities oriented around things that have more impact in society, rather than just count



numbers of publications in a US-dominated journal, which might be categorized as a top journal. The criteria have more to do with the real impact of the publication rather than the outlet in which it has been published. And there are some deans that are changing the way that they work. But they find it hard because they have to convince the universities to work in a similar way. Sometimes that is not possible. They are trapped between their bosses and their staff who want that promotion desperately. So, we are working at the moment on a deans' award, for the deans around the world that have actually done it and have successfully changed the system within their own schools.

The second way that we are trying to change the system, besides influencing the deans, is influencing editors. We often get editors to our annual assembly, and they are very keen. We have had 30 or 40 special issues on these challenges, including the sustainability that we talked about. The editors are keen to change the impact. We are working with them at the moment to develop new measures of impact. That is very important because it touches upon what the gentleman from Switzerland mentioned. That is, in my view, a super question to ask: Why do we need the system that we have? We developed that system ourselves and were successful within it. But it is a very selfish system. If we are the ones who created it, we can now take it apart in a sensible and proper way, and make it more appropriate for the society around us.

So, changing the minds of deans is one aspect, and changing those of editors is another. Another goal is to change the attitudes of scientific committees that decide that a journal is a top journal. This is currently done on metrics. If the metric indicators of a particular journal go down, that means that it should be degraded. But I have spoken to many colleagues locally, and I have spoken to associations and academies, and they say, "No, this journal is doing fantastic work. The complaints are coming from one particular part of the world". And guess what it is. So, the journal itself will not only sustain its position in the rankings but may also be a likely candidate for an increase rather than a decrease of its position. But if we relied solely or primarily on the established metrics, that journal's ranking would decrease. If we talk to people and see the value of their views of that particular journal, it is likely to increase. Relying on metrics can lead us down wrong avenues with the wrong key performance indicators.

So, besides deans and editors, we try to change the attitudes of academics. Many of them, those who created the system, love it. Of course, they do. It made them famous. They belong in the system. The idea of change is quite disturbing for them. But we have ways and means to try to do this. For instance, at our national conference we brought together groups of chief executives and senior managers of major business organizations and public sector management organizations. There were about 50 of them. They told us what they expect from academic research and talked about the topics that they think academics should be researching. Simultaneously, in another room, academics were producing PowerPoint slides about what they would research. Then we put the two lists up on the same screen, with the academics' interests on the left, and those of the business people on the right. And there was no overlap. That was an eye-opener to academics. They wanted to do research based on what they had read about in the literature, not what had relevance in real business. So, we are trying to bridge the gap between what the business world wants from academic research and what academics want to do. We are trying to tease this out and narrow the gap. We publish the names of the authors that have contributed to that. Whether they come from the West or from less developed countries, including sub-Saharan Africa, it does not make a difference.

Changing the system is not going to happen overnight. We are working with the deans, editors, and academics to make it happen. We would be delighted if you have any suggestions concerning what we can do.

### **Xiaobo Wu**

Dorota, can you tell us your view on what is necessary to do in order to change the current trend?

### **Dorota Dobija**

My simplest answer is that I support Peter concerning what he said about responsible research but I have one additional thought on my mind. Yesterday, I attended a workshop on artificial intelligence. Maybe this is a topic for the next CEEMAN conference: the threats and opportunities associated with artificial intelligence. In my view, we can use it for a specific purpose: not for rating people but for learning what is going on around the world. This is an emerging issue that we need to embrace and understand better.

### **Haiying Lin**

I agree with Peter about the need for system change. It is interesting to see how we use keywords to analyze our own community. We talk about incremental versus radical. Also, we seek certainty and we shun uncertainty. We try to tackle efficiency gains versus how effective the system is. We are also doing all kinds of recordings and have guidelines. Is there a way for us to start from scratch by pilot testing at one institution or one journal? This is probably the new way to do it. We demonstrate it and then try to spread the word. That is how things start.

We are operating a social lab here, with ourselves as the unit of analysis. This is an interesting research topic for ourselves. We want diversity instead of homogeneity because that makes everybody the same. We use the same norms and theories and again and again we repeat ourselves. Maybe we can start with something different and radical. I would be keen to get some guidance here from some of our top professors. We can start doing something in our community, such as a special issue devoted to more impactful research. Maybe we should introduce some novel research method approach. Some Nobel prize winners did field research in India. They compared Indian villages. That kind of research is interesting because it is more engaging and forward-looking, instead of looking backward. It is more ongoing, more dynamic. We can probably also run some seminars to look at those research tools. That would be something interesting that I would love to investigate. Maybe we can start with some other trainings with our own students and let them be more forward-thinking. Maybe we can start changing that generation. Thank you very much.

### **Janpolat Kudaybergenov**

I agree with the previous speakers. Research should be responsible for all actors, especially with respect to the metrics, such as publications and citations. Several years ago, this was a compulsory requirement in Uzbekistan: all teachers and researchers had to have publications in internationally recognized journals. Those who were just teaching also had to publish and this was tied to their salaries. As a result, Uzbekistan became a leader in terms of number of publications in fake journals. I think this was the responsibility of all stakeholders because it was a requirement and people tried to satisfy it by any means. It was far from real research and it did not

produce any impact. Therefore, I think that responsibility is important for all stakeholders.

## **Xiaobo Wu**

Our time is up. Thank you for sharing your views and experiences.

What is our main motivation to do responsible research? And what are the practical ways to achieve and improve responsible research? Then, we should think which way we are headed. Learning and research are important parts of a school's mission and that appeals to our faculty. But how we interact with society is also very important. I learned this from a book by Assylbek that he sent me a while ago.

At our university, we are developing a three-I model. We strive to develop our interdisciplinary connections. First, there is a circle of interdisciplinary studies. Then, there is an international circle. Through CEEMAN, we can share all our best practices in order to improve ourselves. Finally, we wish to achieve integration across organizations, so that we can collaborate effectively. That is also a good way for us to improve our responsible research.

Responsible research starts with a response to the call from society. Social science is not pure science. It is different. The key issue is to respond to the social call.

In my view, the trend for the future is glocalization. We have global issues but locally we have different programs and needs that we have to address. We have to provide local responses while remaining tuned to the global needs. That is what glocalization is about.

We also need a more inclusive mindset, paying more attention to diversity. There are different countries at different stages of development. And they have different development targets. We should respect those differences. That is my view.

Thank you all very much.

# Integrating Sustainability in Curricula: Learning from Best Practices



**Lisa Fröhlich**

Sustainable Supply Chain Expert  
Germany

A very warm welcome to this panel. It is great to see you all. I only have a very brief introduction because we have four outstanding panelists. We are going to have contributions from all around the world. We cover all continents and we expect wonderful presentations. Integrating sustainability in curricula is a difficult topic to talk about. We will learn from concrete examples of what colleagues are offering at various universities around the world. After the presentations, we have some interesting questions to discuss.

I came across the statement “Everything must change so that everything can stay as it is”. It was in a newspaper in Germany. I really liked it. It is true: everything that we have known for years, such as globalization and digitalization, is still there.

One of the most important questions for us is what we want to teach. We have to adapt to unconventional teaching. We are talking about case design and role play but we have so much more out there. That is why we have invited these phenomenal panelists. They can tell us about the great innovative teaching formats they are implementing in their sustainability lessons. We can benefit a lot from what we learn from them. We have to collaborate and learn from each other. That is what I want to achieve through this panel here: exchange of information and learning.

I am reading a book written by Henry Mintzberg. I had the honor of meeting him in person at the last AOM conference in Boston. I was really enlightened by his spirit. He is always redefining himself, which makes him

a great role model for us. Every page that I read seemed interesting and important. He says for example that anybody who believes that corporate social responsibility will compensate for corporate social irresponsibility is living in a win-win wonderland. That is exactly the problem that we are facing right now. We try to bring sustainability into research and teaching, but our environment is not changing. It remains irresponsible. So, we are not changing the game but the play field.

We have to go back to our founding fathers, such as Adam Smith and Joseph Schumpeter, because they already integrated in their theories what we are discussing today. They told us to be creative and avoid repetition, and that is what we are doing now. We are constantly talking about innovation and creativity, but we only have the old model in our minds. Our management approach covers the steps analyzing and planning, implementing and monitoring, but this triad does not lead to any innovation. So, we have to reinvent the theoretical part too.

PRME has a new format called PRME's Favorites. An Indian professor came up with an Arts in Management Education idea. I checked the literature she used in her blog and I found a lot of CEEMAN members cited. This could be another interesting initiative to join. Perhaps we can do something together to promote it.

These are some ideas I wanted to share concerning potential collaboration in the field of integrating sustainability in our teaching programs. Now, I am handing the floor over to the panelists.

### **Louise Whittaker**

Deputy Dean & Executive Director:  
Faculty at GIBS Business School  
South Africa



Thank you for accommodating me all the way from Johannesburg this morning. I am sorry I was not able to come to Almaty due to some visa and coordination issues. But it is wonderful to be accommodated online and I really appreciate it.

I am going to share our experience in terms of integrating sustainability in the curriculum. I have to say upfront that this project that I am going to talk about today is not my project, so I don't take personal credit for it. It was developed by our MBA director, and it has been enormously successful for us. I am going to speak about a particular project that was developed in order to integrate sustainability into our curriculum. It is one of a broad set of things that we are doing about the climate as that includes every aspect of the environment in which we live.

Let me just tell you a little bit about who are. GIBS stands for Gordon Institute for Business Science at the business school of the University of Pretoria, which is the administrative capital of South Africa. We are physically located in Johannesburg though, which is the business capital of the country, about 60 kilometers away from Pretoria. We are a post-graduate school. We do not have any undergraduate students. With the exception of one small cohort, all our students are working professionals. The average age of our MBA students is about 35, and they are all engaged in their work practice as they study with us.

That was a bit of context about the school. Now, I think it is important to have some context about South Africa, too. That should give you an indication of why sustainability is so important to us, at our institution, and to our society. South Africa has a fairly well-developed economy. It is the third largest in Africa and it has the third highest gross domestic product per person on the continent. It developed on the basis of extractive industries and agriculture, but now we have a strong financial sector and technology industries. Unfortunately, we face a myriad of problems. Our unemployment rate is about 35 percent. The youth unemployment rate is nearly 50 percent. In some provinces of the country, it is even higher than that. We have the unhappy distinction of having the highest Gini coefficient in the world. That means not only high inequality but also a high poverty level. We have substantial issues with corruption in both the public and private sector. We are also experiencing water scarcity. In general, Africa is a water-scarce continent and South Africa is no exception to that. In addition to the fact that it does not rain much, we also have infrastructure problems, which contribute to the water scarcity. We also have significant power supply issues, with daily power cuts. Today, that will probably last four hours but it can go to up to 10 hours a day. That is because of our old coal-driven power stations that provide most of our power. That means that we have a very high level of carbon emissions. We are one of the worst carbon emitters in the world and, of course, we have serious air quality issues deriving from that. So, we are facing very significant challenges, and we really need to think about sustainability. It is not an abstract thing for us. It is a very concrete set of challenges that we need to address.

We want to make all this real to our students, not just in terms of the problems that we face every day, but also in terms of what we could do about them. We are focusing on how we can address these challenges and how we can integrate them in our curriculum.

We designed a project for our postgraduate diploma in business administration for reasons of alignment and accreditation in the South African education system. Practically speaking, the first year of our MBA program is this post-graduate diploma. It is essentially an element of our MBA program. The learning goal is for the students to acquire functional knowledge and skills in management. These are typical subjects, such as marketing, human resources, operations management, financial management, and accounting. A secondary learning goal is the effect of management on themselves. So this involves a lot of personal development. That is what happens in that first year of the MBA program. But the overall objective is to give people essential business knowledge, because many of the students come from various places and do not necessarily have an academic background in management. They may be engineers, doctors, and suchlike. We need to provide some academic background in management in year one. The challenge about the curriculum is that when you teach these functional subjects you have to integrate them. That is always a big question. Specifically, with respect to integrating the sustainability part, how do you make sure that what you are teaching has impact? And how do you make it relevant to the business and social context in which the students



find themselves? We have been thinking how we can do things differently, how we can renew our pedagogy and create something innovative and challenging for us and for the students.

We designed what we called an applied business project. Such projects are not new at GIBS. We have a lot of those in our executive education. The participants have to identify problems in their business and solve them. But in this case the applied business project is a bit different. First of all, the students come from different organizations. That means they will not find one organization where they can do a project. Second, we really want to focus on societal issues but from a business perspective. This project takes the full duration of the program, which is one year. They start doing it pretty much on day one. We tell them about it and they spend the entire year working on it. It is complex and structured. We give them guidance about the process but not about the content of what they do. They have to develop the concept of the project themselves. We do that on purpose, because that is how life is in the business world. This assignment accounts for 17 percent of the students' overall assessment. Most subjects carry 10 credits but this one carries 20. It is a very substantial piece of work that the students need to complete in order to finish the program successfully. To set this up in a way that enables the students to tackle societal problems, we use the sustainable development goals as a framework.

In South Africa, we are confronted with a wide range of challenges. Not all of them are closely linked to the sustainable development goals. We tell the students that their project must explicitly be associated with those goals, with the exception of number three. That one is health-related and is not appropriate in our environment.

The students must find a solution to their problem. It is up to them to identify it but it must be related to a sustainable development goal in the South African setting. It is a research project of sorts and we instruct the students to choose a goal, decide on an issue, analyze the situation, and develop a solution for one aspect of the problem. They do research using multiple data collection methods, and make use of the academic literature to come up with a problem analysis and solution.

So, it is a research project based on a sustainable development goal issue. The other part that is important to us is the integration part. We ask them to apply theory from at least six of their 10 core subjects. They have to be very specific about how they have applied what they have learned in those subjects in order to come up with a solution. It is solution-focused and based on the sustainable development goals, but it also involves integration of what they have learned over the course of their studies. The idea is to provide a real-world application of the theory that they have learned, which is the requirement for integration.

So, how does this work? There are many benefits to the project. It is quite challenging to the students at multiple levels. It is a big syndicate project that always comes with challenges. It requires the students to think outside of their immediate business environment, which is also challenging for them. It also requires them to gather empirical data, sometimes in communities where they have never been before, and that can be very difficult for them. In one word, it is a big deal. But we are finding that this has a lot of benefits for us and for the students.

It is strange that sometimes there is no connection between the way that people experience their lives and climate change. I attended an online session with some of our students in the middle of the COVID epidemic. It was a joint session, run together with a European organization. The topics of climate and sustainability came up a lot. One of the students commented on this afterwards that this is a first-world problem. "Sorting

climate change is not our problem. We have more immediate problems in our environment. Why are we even thinking about climate change?" To be able to connect the immediate problems that we face to the broader sustainability challenges is really important for us because they get people out of their narrow-minded mindsets, focused on their immediate problems. It opens their eyes to the sustainability issues at a global level. That is a really important thing that we need to be doing. We find that this project is really helpful in that regard.

We hope that we get some viable business solutions. We have had a few that the students are really applying. There is also a range of pedagogical benefits, such as development of thinking skills. We need to develop research skills as we have a research component in our MBA program. So, this process generates a useful byproduct. We have done well externally as well as internally with this project. For example, we have been recognized by the PRME project, and we have been praised at a number of places for the design and outcome of this project.

One of the teams worked on sustainable development goal six, which is clean water and sanitation for all. The study focused on changing attitudes and behaviors affecting urban domestic households in our province. This was about water consumption: we have excessive consumption even though we do not have enough water. This is a very real problem, not hypothetical. The students found that if there is education and awareness, water use behavior could improve. They also came up with a water use monitoring application that people can use: a real product that has practical utility.

I hope that this has given you an overview of a particular piece of work that we have done in an effort to integrate sustainability into our curriculum. It remains an ongoing challenge that none of us can afford to neglect.

## **Lisa Fröhlich**

Thank you very much. These projects are really important. I hope you can stay with us a little longer because this is a very interesting question: how to motivate and engage students. It is a completely different learning journey. You have to do a lot more and it takes much more motivation on the part of the students. Especially after the COVID pandemic, we have to find ways to improve our educational approaches so that the students come engage again and come up with relevant solutions.

Our next speaker is Rob van Tulder, professor of business and society at Rotterdam School of Management. He will present the European perspective on teaching and integrating sustainability in business. I was glad to read his latest book *Principles of Sustainable Business* and I recommend it to all of you.

## **Rob van Tulder**

Professor of International  
Business-Society Management at  
Rotterdam School of Management

The Netherlands



Thank you for having me at your conference. I have just come back from New York where the General Assembly of the United Nations took place. It was also the week of the Interim Report on Climate Action and a lot of other related issues that stress the importance of leadership and the need to fast-forward on vital parts of the sustainability agenda, such as “living wage”, “gender equality”, “climate” and “digitalization”. We need a Decade of Action as we are midway on the road toward the 2030 sustainable development goals, but seriously ‘off-track’. Integrating vital sustainability issues in the university curriculum, thus, is not a luxury but a necessity if universities want to keep – and hopefully enhance - their societal relevance. I am going to convey two main messages in the next 15 minutes. First, if you want to integrate sustainability in your curriculum, you have to make it challenge-based. Second, if you want to align with the global Decade of Action, the curriculum, as well as the organization of the institute, has to become principles-based.

The challenge for teaching and research institutes is to decide thereby what to do about the increasing level of complexity of the present global society – the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world (known as VUCA). Should we divide complexity into small parts, analyze each of these dimensions separately, and then hopefully develop something that can help us solve some of the problems? Or do we start with a systems approach, try to get an overview and then zoom in on particular issues that require prioritization? How do we approach the integration of complex sustainability challenges in our curricula?

On closer scrutiny, the world faces much fewer natural than man-made crises - crises that are the result of poorly and unfairly organized economies, globalization processes and so forth. Crises range from financial collapses, increasing refugee streams, recurring poverty and hunger to (also) global warming. According to the World Economic Forum, many crises are interconnected. They call this a “poly-crisis”. Global warming for instance is intimately related to the increasing-cost-of-living crisis in large parts of the world. According to the 2023 sustainable development report of the UN, we are faced with a “cascade” of crises. We live in a multipolar world undergoing rapid transition, in which simple solutions are not available, while addressing the causes of crises requires sophisticated approaches and analytical frameworks. That is the general challenge. More specifically for knowledge institutions, I think that we therefore face three interconnected challenges.

First, there is an institutional challenge: we need to enhance the societal relevance of business schools. The second challenge concerns the societal relevance of research. The creation of appropriate scientific approach to so-called “wicked problems” and “wicked opportunities” is necessary. This, in my view, can be made more purposeful by explicitly linking research to the sustainable development goals. The result will arguably be a global agenda within which relevant research outcomes can be accumulated and communicated. That is not a simple challenge. And of course, thirdly, teaching cannot be separated from the challenges that our students themselves experience. The way teaching institutes can enable students to develop relevant skills is closely related to the way in which those institutes organize and fund themselves and their research.

Let me share some of the experiences we have had at the Rotterdam School of Management. Over the last 10 years, we have been trying to address all of the above challenges, while stimulating students to deal with complexity, stay motivated, and perhaps also try to figure out what the root causes of the problems are before inventing solutions to them. My presentation is focused on the lessons we have drawn from our efforts to align all three challenges.

## **Six Decisions**

Aligning the orientation of the institute, the teachers, and the students make six vital decisions. They design a challenge-based and principles-based organization and curriculum, in which they select an appropriate framing that takes into account the depth and breadth of the challenge. Relevant frames can be scientific or practical, but none of them suggests a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution or the dominance of one theory or method. Challenge-based framing requires methodological and theoretical ‘triangulation’.

The next step to take involves a good understanding that addressing change requires ‘navigation’ rather than ‘planning’. This presents a much less solid transition pathway and more iterative processes than most organizations seem to prefer. I was happy that Lisa mentioned Henri Mintzberg. He wrote about the need to “rebalance society”, and the need to navigate this challenge as an iterative or strategic tinkering process.

This brings me to the final decisions that universities have to take. Navigating successful change as an iterative and challenge-based process in the right direction and with the informed participants is facilitated by self-assessment (zero-measurement) and empowerment of the participants that is guided by clear purpose-driven ambitions that feed back into the selected challenges.

The basic challenge for any knowledge institute searching for societal legitimacy thus commences with the choice of the societal challenges to focus on, and the organizational principles to embrace. In selecting proper frames, what kind of impact do you focus on? In navigating change, how do you measure it? In empowering your staff, your students, or your country, how do you facilitate that? And if you want to guide in the right direction from the start, what value proposition, motto, or vision are you going to focus on? I will use these six elements briefly to guide you through this idea of how to deal with the challenges on an institutional, teaching, and student level. I will provide you with some of the ideas and experiences gained at the Rotterdam School of Management. Many of these efforts were only managed as iterative processes in which top-down and bottom-up processes became mutually reinforcing. Most are susceptible to strategic tinkering processes, and none is perfect.

## Dealing with Institutional Challenges

Portraying the many institutional challenges that knowledge institutes face, is like a dark blue cloud that hangs above the institute and its constituents. To a certain extent, the cloud illustrates the rather volatile and even increasingly toxic environment that universities face. Fundamental challenges include the funding of the institution and how a principles-based approach would help deal with that challenge. At Rotterdam School of Management, we decided that we wanted to be “a force for positive change in the world”. We produced a little booklet in which we make a link with the sustainable development goals: navigating along questions of why, what, who, and how in which scientific inquiry should be grounded. At the same time, we started to engage all staff, including the supporting staff, in trying to figure out what can be done to align their personal motivation with respect to the sustainable development goals agenda. What topics do you want to address? How do you want to give purpose to your daily activities?

We started to recreate the campus in order to enhance this as an inspirational environment. There were posters around it and we even planted a tree symbolizing a synthesis between head, heart, and hands. We now have a campus that looks completely different from the one that we had 15 years ago. Back then, it was just a collection of office buildings. Now it has become a community, including a pond, a theater, and student housing.

We actively created frames to guide action as an active tool that could be used to bring society to our campus. We used the frames of the sustainable development goals to figure out what we could do together with others. This is just an illustration of one of the many efforts that have been made since 2015.

We also provided scientific explanations of the need to consider sustainability a leading challenge for the business school and view the sustainable development goals as the most important framework for research and teaching activities. A seemingly obvious step, which however did not materialize easily, was the creation of an open access booklet series to be used in teaching and research activities in a variety of scientific areas. This ultimately resulted in a number of fundamental integrative contributions. We also published a more specialized book on sustainable finance by Prof. Dirk Schoenmaker. It was used in a massive open online course as well as Master courses.

The most integrated effort became my book that Lisa referred to in her statement: Principles of Sustainable Business. Its predecessor was a short open-access booklet in the booklet series (no. zero). You can find it on our website. We published it to support academic thinking, but also to legitimize the integrated and focused approach of the whole business school. The book provides an abundance of scans, tools, frameworks (so-called tips and tricks) based on 10 years of teaching and action research. An extensive website provides further information and support for teachers. And the most practical and open-access solution was to reach out and solicit feedback from many people around the world. In an intermediary stage we created a massive open online course on the sustainable development goals, which quickly reached more than 40,000 followers. This is one part of the lessons learned: as an academic community, try to internalize the challenges. Work on that and create an environment where you can also hopefully be inspirational. But also reach out. That does not mean just lecturing to the rest of the world. We actively searched for interaction with the world, so as to be able to improve ourselves.

## Dealing with Research and Teaching Challenges

Let me get to the second point: the research and teaching orientation of an institution. The challenge for management scholars became translated in slightly more generic terms by looking at society's grand challenges. We need to look at the systemic things, but also at the societal and operational parts. The main frame concerns corporate action. Navigating change is dealing with strategic gaps. That is where Mintzberg comes again into play in terms of tinkering processes and overcoming intention realization gaps. This also has to do with empowering the staff. That implied for instance that we did not just develop cases without a context or apply standard Harvard cases that were less relevant for our own business schools. We need to contextualize our management tools. It has become obvious that the sustainable development goals are not only important but can also help contextualize and compare results across borders and business schools.

Our fundamental research and teaching approach is therefore based on the book that Lisa mentioned. It not only looks at principles, but also adopts frameworks to implement change for corporate action on the sustainable development goals: that is, all six decisions brought together in one integrated approach. The book and the website became part of the PRME series as an effort to engage colleagues and practitioners not only through our own approach, but also by aligning ourselves with other organizations and practices around the world. What would be more convenient than to align with the global agenda of the sustainable development goals, acknowledging that although it is perhaps not perfect, it is the best that we have?

Fundamental personal challenges for academics also include generic challenges, such as climate change, pollution, debt, and poverty. They also have to do with the lower status of academics, stress related to the need to obtain tenure, the publish-or-perish system, and other operational problems that academics face in the competitive environment that academia presents to many, including flexible contracts and modest salaries. All this creates stress and motivational barriers in case an institution wants to focus on more complex and interdisciplinary questions. It is important to search for ways to deal with these challenges, linking them with research. How do you deal with that? One way – beyond integrating the sustainable development goals in teaching and research – is to enhance societal engagement by focusing on action research and transdisciplinary methods. Innovative tools are needed, but also different human resource management practices and impact measurement for academic excellence. Lisa mentioned the Partnership Resource Center. That is where we try to link academic research with societal issues. At that center, together with the recipients of action research tools, we developed, scan and experience labs, in which multiple stakeholders work on common problems. We produced for instance the Better Business Scan that managers can use in 15 minutes. It serves as a starting-point for a conversation with and between managers, who can discuss where they are and where they would like to go with respect to their business model. The scan links directly with research and teaching programs. At the moment, we are trying to customize our approach, working with a wide variety of business schools from Ireland to Malaysia. The fundamental frameworks are applied by them, but contextualized for local audiences. To support teachers in this approach, teacher resources have been added to the website of the basic book (Principles of Sustainable Business). The use of these resources has become part of a co-creation effort with universities around the world.



## Dealing with Generation Z Student Challenges

I am getting to the last part of my presentation. We need to talk about the challenges that students face. That will help us to reinvent or recreate our teaching orientations. Most generation Z individuals are worried about the climate crisis to a higher degree than previous student generations and even their parents. Students also face specific challenges, such as housing and debt problems, loneliness as a result of overreliance on social media, and stress. The robotization and flexibilization in their prospective work environment also contribute to their poor well-being. In South Africa, unemployment is a major problem. In more developed countries, students have a different problem: that they will have fewer opportunities than their parents. Students' problems have to be contextualized in order to make them owners of the university's approach.

Their basic challenge for students relate to their training for development of so-called "21st century skills", of which "dealing with complexity" is the most important one. We adopted principles developed by PRME, aiming at enhancing life-long learning capabilities. We also adopted methods for personal action and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for our students. Navigating change is based on the development of sustainable leadership skills. That is not just leadership as a chief executive officer of a company but also as a student or a manager. You can always become an agent of change in your community. Self-assessment will be about life-long learning principles. You do it alone but you also have to collaborate. So, we organize buddy groups and collaborative challenges, not as a luxury or a teaching extensification means, but as a necessity to learn the relevant skills. An explicit link with the sustainable development goals agenda is made through embracing the so-called "inner development goals", which include capabilities such as courage, creativity, and integrity. The basic book and format used in the training of relevant skills is called the "Skill Sheets" (see: [www.skillsheets.com](http://www.skillsheets.com)). We took the challenges of our students very seriously.

To deal with these challenges, the Skill Sheets adopted a principles-based approach. We have identified seven basic skills – based on a skill circle - that students need to develop on the basis of a number of principles. The basic principles as a basis of all other skills are the principles of good research. Another principle is that of life-long learning. Two input-oriented skill principles concern active reading and constructive listening. Output oriented skills are based on principles of what we call "powerful writing" and "presentations as an act of co-creation". There exists a website that helps students with the basics of this approach. The final one is the principle of effective team management. For instance, I tell my students to work together, not because it is a luxury, but because it is probably the best way to deal with all the complexities that they will face for the rest of their lives. Every team is a group, but not every group is a team, so collaboration becomes a vital skill to work not only on assignments, but also on creating the conditions for sustainable development, which is based on five principles: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnering. These principles create the precondition for impact on all 17 sustainable development goals.

How do we do all that? How do we frame it? How do we challenge our students? We came up with an "I will" campaign more than 10 years ago, before the sustainable development goals. This campaign had an interesting result: none of the more than 10,000 students that have made an "I will" poster of themselves came up with "making money" or comparable statements, despite the idea that most people have of business students. When confronted with this challenge, most students formulated goals, such as "I will educate the world" or "I will create the conditions for prosperity for all". In a course on sustainable leadership, we added an element

to this individual statement. We wanted to make the individual ambition collective. So, we asked buddy groups to move from an “I will” to a “we will” statement. Documentation of how this has been developed can be found on the website under “sustainable leadership profiler”.

The innovative teaching tools that were developed to implement joint frames, and empowerment and group work, included the use of posters either as individual means of communication or as group means of working together on a focused challenge. Poster presentations constitute a regular activity at conferences of scientists, as they are an excellent way of presenting arguments and getting constructive feedback. The interaction in class and in buddy groups is based on sociocratic principles. Students are stimulated to give constructive feedback and work on providing joint insights instead of talking in terms of compromises or false contradictions.

The last thing I could mention is a big project that we are now developing in the province of South Holland. Many organizations in our region have adopted the sustainable development goals, but they do not know how to implement them. So we have a collaborative project with two other major universities in the region to create a challenged-based learning program. The students engage in addressing a number of issues of our clients: local governments and municipalities, small companies, big multinationals, non-government organizations. We create a joint learning environment where the impact of the program is not just teaching and research. We try to be effective in this region of South Holland and engage in action that is badly needed. This program has been designed on the basis of another pilot project that was developed in the last five years: the sustainable development goals traineeship. The trainees are happy with the experience, saying that they will not succumb into a doom and gloom mood. They see the adoption of the goals as challenges, but also as opportunities that require collaborative efforts to make the attainment of those goals possible.

### **Final thoughts**

At the Rotterdam School of Management, we have been working on this integrated approach for approximately 15 years. It is not something that we want to keep to ourselves as a competitive advantage tool. We would like to work together with others in order to speed up the implementation of the sustainable development goals during the remaining seven years of the Decade of Action. We would be glad to support you in your efforts.

At the beginning, I said that the big issue is to integrate institutes, teachers, researchers, and students in a challenge-based learning environment, and to apply principles. There are 1,000 ways of doing that. I would love to engage in a conversation on that with all of you. You can contact me at [rtulder@rsm.nl](mailto:rtulder@rsm.nl). At our website ([www.principlesofsustainablebusiness.nl](http://www.principlesofsustainablebusiness.nl)) our principles of teaching, research, and organizational change are explained and illustrated in more detail. Thank you very much.

### **Lisa Fröhlich**

Thank you, Rob. Yes, we have those sheets that you mentioned, but we keep starting this conversation on what we need over and over again. We have so many good approaches out there already. We should somehow study them and bring them together, taking into account the various cultural differences that we observe.

We now move on to the next geographic area: Central Asia. We will also hear the US perspective. The next speaker is Aurora Diaz-Soloaga who focuses on leadership, corporate social responsibility, and global management. She got the best-teacher award from CEEMAN last year. Congrat-

ulations on that. Please, tell us what you do at your university and what Central Asian educators can learn from you.

**Aurora Diaz-Soloaga**  
Senior Lecturer at Almaty  
Management University  
Kazakhstan



I am very happy to be able to tell you what we have been doing at AlmaU. It is the result of a joint effort by all our colleagues. Together, we are trying to find a new approach to sustainable and responsible management education. I think that Rob already provided us with a great bird view, so I will try to keep my presentation short. We have been discussing the necessity to cover the gap that all of us, as educators and leaders, are facing. The big challenge is the difference between what the market expects from our students and what we have been able to provide. There is a lot of research focusing on that gap, between sustainability skills training and the abilities of people entering the work force. As you know, the World Economic Forum and many other institutions are now realizing that the gap is greater than we previously thought. Now is time to address this issue.

The greatest challenge today are our students, the work force of tomorrow. What strategy should we promote for business schools and social science universities to respond to the changing demands of the world? At the end of the day, we all realize that a focus on growth, profit, and greed - which is the current pedagogical focus - is too focused on content rather than on a new way of thinking.

I borrowed something from Mette Morsing's presentation: we need to focus on the social sciences because they create the next generation of leaders. That means a huge number of students. We are talking about 70 million students of business and management nowadays. That is why PRME decided to focus on a better promotion of pedagogy, so as to fill the gap.

I would now like to tell you about the implementation of our practices in the Central Asian context. One of these projects is the Global Social Impact Fellowship at AlmaU. That is a collaborative project with another university, and it is very much focused on the promotion of sustainability and responsible management education. I would also like to talk briefly about something that was mentioned yesterday: the need to promote a meaningful experience for the students.

All of you have heard about the PRME network. I don't know if you have heard about I5 though, which stands for "impact five". That is probably the flagship initiative of PRME. The outcome of it is now very clear. During the last year and a half, many people around the world have made a huge effort. The project has received some serious financing. Therefore, we be-

lieve that it can have a great impact.

This is a pedagogy, not about course content. It is about the way that we relay the content or, to put it simply, the way that we teach. The main idea is to develop a holistic skill set in the students and to equip educators with tools that they need to teach the students in the fields that we have discussed.

The I5 project derives from a large study by the Lego Foundation, precisely devoted to the question of what competencies can make learning an impactful experience. With the help and financing of the Lego Foundation, and keeping in mind the context of business schools worldwide, during the last year and a half, we have experimented and learned from each other. By "each other" I mean the representatives of signatories of the entire PRME community, which is quite large and organized in regional chapters. We are proudly part of the Eurasian chapter. We experimented with the five methods that are supposedly most impactful, focusing on teaching responsible leaders. The expected result is students and teachers with a much more holistic skill set, prepared to be tomorrow's responsible leaders.

The five principles are, as follows: to make learning meaningful, foster joy and well-being, develop supporting social interaction, facilitate active engagement, and a design for iteration. This is supposed to change the entire educational process. Everything that we do in the classroom should follow these five principles. I should also explain that each of them is articulated in different movements. As teachers, we try to make learning meaningful. For instance, we do that by means of activities or approaches that take into consideration role modeling, personalization, and dignification. The first outcome that we have from this project is a so-called play-book. It has already been published open access. You can find it very easily on PRME's webpage.

During the last year and a half, I worked with other experts to define new activities. But I also redesigned and put the focus on all the activities that I already had in my classes. I experimented with a good number of students - almost 150 - from three different majors for two semesters and a half. In the specific context of Central Asia, I perceive the necessity or relevance of a specific movement. I found that the principles that I talked about are very relevant to our students at AlmaU. That is quite challenging for me as a teacher. But I also discovered a new perspective for focusing on my classes.

A couple of words about a second initiative that we have launched here at AlmaU. I had the honor to start it and promote it with my colleagues here. That is the Global Social Impact Fellowship. It is a collaborative project with a Pennsylvanian university. The idea is to create a student cooperation center, focusing on shared problems that we could address together one way or another. The goal is to increase social awareness. If I tell you that the problem I work on is air pollution in Almaty, you will realize that it is not a problem that we can solve in a couple of months. Together with our students, we recommended action and created a mobile application. This may sound like an interesting international experience.

I also work on the sustainability mindset. The idea is that if you have such a mindset, you will discover new challenges -could be corruption, could be many others- that may not be included in an agenda, but that are still crucial. Because this mindset is a way of being.

I believe we can create many meaningful experiences in class. Yesterday, a speaker mentioned the idea of giving agency to the students. I have had very good experiences with them, focusing for instance on how they can get involved in something as interesting as the future of higher education. That was for instance in the context of a Hackaton promoted at a Spanish

university some time ago and I collaborated with them. It was extremely insightful for our students. During two weeks, they reflected on the future of higher education.

We also had a mirror class with La Rochelle University in France on digitalization and sustainability.

These are small activities that can grow into something bigger. It is like a declaration of principles. We are here to make the students responsible and aware of their role of agents of change. In that way, we will not only help them overcome insecurity, but also nurture the change that we would like to see at our institutions tomorrow.

## **Lisa Fröhlich**

I must admit that I did not know much about how to implement parts of the PRME i5 project in the classroom, so I was very interested in this presentation. It was great to hear what you do at your university. Mette and I talked about the fact that we need more emphasis on sustainability in management education rather than on technical subjects. This is something that we can discuss in the future.

There is a reason for the order of the presentations on this panel. I am handing now over to Saloni Sinha from India. She is famous all around the world for her art and theater-based innovative teaching. She offers approaches we in Europe do not use, very inspiring.

She is also involved in a lot of social projects and her mantra is to be innovative. She is constantly thinking how she can serve society through teaching programs. Apart from teaching students, she works with government bodies. Saloni, the floor is yours.

## **Saloni Sinha**

Communication and Theatre  
Faculty member at Birla Institute  
of Management Technology  
India



Namaste. I am Saloni from India. As you now, India is a very diverse country. It would not be possible to tell you in 15 minutes everything that we do but I will take you on an interesting journey.

We have a high number of chief executive officers, leading big corporations. We are also a country of many young people. Therefore building the right mindset is very important. Those people need the right kind of skills.

I would like to tell you briefly about my institute. It is an AACSB-accredited school, set up by founders who had been active in the industrial sector, pursuing a social mission. We carry that in our culture. Therefore, you can

see that we are part of a lot of these initiatives, such as Social Impact, PRME, and so forth. I will not elaborate on those. But I would like to tell you about the mission, vision, and values of our institute because that gives us an agenda. That is important for me as a faculty member as whatever I do I must align all my activities with the mission, vision, and values of my institute, as well as the regulators and accreditation bodies, which have allowed us to deliver our programs for more than three decades now.

I am going to share some experiences that my students and I have had. We all talk about various agents, such as societies and other groups of people. But we do not say that it is actually us, the teachers, who come to the classroom. Ever since I started teaching, I have been involved in some social activity. Some part of my work has always brought the students to social community work. That has always made the organizations that I worked for initiate solid social impact projects. In engineering college, I created a social campaign called Creating Aware and Responsible Engineers for Society (CARES). It is still an active welfare program.

At our institute, we embrace social impact work not because we are accredited by AACSB or another association, but because our students have to become global change makers. They will be managing companies and they need the right skills and the right mindset. When I enter my class, I pursue this agenda. It does not have to do that much with my subject but with doing the right thing for society. We need to be very curious and very courageous if we want the classroom to change. By “we”, I mean all of us individually and as faculty. I am not talking about the institute and the accreditation bodies. This gives us an opportunity to create the desirable impact associated with the sustainable development goals. The AACSB talks about smart skills and future skills. Everybody is talking about future skills. But we want empathetic people. Beyond that, they are trainable. So, these are the main reasons that I enter my class and I bring my students together.

I wanted to share with you that we make social leaders in the classrooms. When we nurture these skills right, we have a global presence because of the initiatives taken by the students. I also do a lot of things outside the classroom, such as student group societies, for instance clubs where they can pursue interests and passions: music or visual arts. An immense scope of possibilities is available to us to integrate sustainable development goals.

We are talking about these global reports. They talk about entrepreneurship, leadership and management. That is really important for us. I have looked at a report on India’s national education policy. It opens up a lot of opportunities for all of you to integrate some sustainable development goals agenda with us.

During the COVID pandemic, we had to deal with technological challenges, such as teaching by Internet. We had to be very adaptive. We realized that we are not just in India. We are all over the globe. Therefore, we need cross-cultural skills. Therefore, curiosity was the most important skill for our students. We survived a bumpy ride and the students were in very trying situations that we were not aware of. I created an assignment which helped me manage these things. I did that by bringing a lot of love and compassion into my class, amid the chaotic world that we were in. I thought it was good to introduce art because it could bring people together. The reports back then were really crying out loud for a global mindset, creativity, and suchlike. The assignment asked the students to create comic books. I made them work and research groups of nations. They had to identify a social problem reported in the media during the COVID crisis. That made them understand those social challenges. I had a wonderful mentor: the head of the learning and development department at Microsoft. He does a lot



of sketch notes. I shared my idea with him and he loved it. So, I brought industry mentoring into my curriculum design. However, the students rejected my assignment because they did not have time to prepare for it. But we have wonderful students who are part of my theater club and they were part of the same class to which I announced this. They supported me and created wonderful cartoons. And the best thing is that we got a lot of recognition for this work. It happened because we trusted each other.

Also, our students go out in the community to sensitize people about sustainable development goals. Sometimes they visit five locations on the same day. This is what we do as a club. We also have a lot of discussions and round tables. We also set up the first ever student-led business literature festival and we have it in February every year. This year, we organized its third edition.

You do not have to stick to what the accreditation bodies say. Be courageous and the accreditation bodies will find space for you. That is what they did.

## **Lisa Fröhlich**

I think this was an amazing journey across different continents, involving different approaches.

We have three main stakeholders. First, we have to think about how to motivate our students. India is a perfect example, showing us how this can be done. A lot of people in education complain that students lack motivation, but if we try to implement some of Saloni's approaches, they will work.

Rob talked about institutional problems and I tried to visualize a statement from Henry Minzberg's latest book. Our institutional surrounding has to change. We have to give space to the innovative educators. My most important question to the panelists and the rest of you is what can we do so that our educators are willing to implement innovative teaching formats. The problem is that if you challenge students with a completely new approach, they will first say "no". They will think that it is too much work and they will be unfamiliar with it. They will not be willing to join you. Educators, especially if they are on a tenure track journey, are not willing to take the risk of implementing novelty because then their journey is jeopardized. They may not become a full professor. Then, what can we do to support the educators to adopt the innovative teaching formats that we have been talking about?

## **Response from the audience**

I often see that at a higher education level but also at a primary and secondary education level. A lot of good initiatives are happening but the problem is that it is up to individual teachers to decide whether to deliver that content or not. So, you get one out of maybe 30 teachers who are really proactive and want to do it. But it is difficult even for those who are proactive because it is not part of the curriculum. It is just an add-on that creates a lot of implementation difficulties. Teachers already have a full load of work that they need to deliver based on the standards and learning objectives that they have for their subjects. So, any additional content is hard for them. My view is that all these things should be made mandatory. They should be integrated into the subjects, which are then approved by the university. Then, this is delivered by the teachers. You can make books mandatory, right? There is mandatory reading content certified by the university that each teacher needs to teach in each subject. Likewise, they should use methodologies certified by the university.

## **Lisa Fröhlich**

You are talking about the institutional framework. You have to convince the deans and then the new teaching and research approaches have to be accepted by the accreditation agencies. If not, you have an issue.

## **Saloni Sinha**

I will tell you quickly about my experience with the AACSB. The comic book assignment was part of my effective management communication class. At first it was meant for international business students, but I continued it in my other sections. And it was replicated elsewhere at the business school. We were in the process of accreditation at that time. The agency wanted examples of learning by doing and creative projects that were replicated in other subjects. That was fantastic. All my examples were shared as an example. It worked very well for us and the accreditation agency accepted that. It was initially just my small class work but it had a broader impact for the institution's branding and accreditation. The comics book has been used in finance, strategy, and leadership classes. The solution is collaboration and an interdisciplinary approach. It will get your institution motivated to support you.

## **Comment from the audience**

I was looking at this from the students' perspective. We have to allow our students to fail without affecting their grades. They worry about their grades. That is plain and simple. They want to get a good grade. I teach negotiations. I tell my students that it is OK if they cannot conclude a negotiation and cannot come to a deal, as long as they have implemented what we have talked about and have shown me that they have learned some skills. I always give my students the opportunity to fail. They learn from that failure and then try something bolder. They come to me and say that they want to look at things from a new perspective and I tell them that is fine, let us talk about it. Let us think how they will move that forward. I want to see how they will apply what we have learned in class.

I also think that the university should allow faculty members to fail. They should be allowed to try something new, and if it not successful that should be ok. But I don't think that every university is very good at allowing faculty failures.

## **Lisa Fröhlich**

Fine, but we are back to the legal requirements. I see that Rob is still there and I want to ask him how we can change the business model of a university so that it enables faculty failures. We discussed something similar on the previous panel. We have very strict ideas about what constitutes good research but that is not having any impact. So, we need change in that area, too.

## **Rob van Tulder**

We teach business and we try to equip our students with 21st century business skills but we do not listen to business. If we had listened to business, we would have found out that they intend to be sustainable for a variety of reasons, but they have difficulty implementing sustainability. I see the same thing at universities. The intention is there but implementation is difficult. The remarks that many of you made are really relevant.

We can use the enthusiasm of individual teachers and researchers and

then listen to our students. At least 60 percent of them state that they see challenges in their lives, and in society, and they would like to see the university doing something about that.

We have been doing this for 10 years now. It is not perfect at all. There is actually a vicious approach there. For instance, I took all the initiatives concerning the sustainable development goals and some of my well-intended colleagues say, “Well, since Rob is doing that for my department, I don’t have to do that”. And we go back to business as usual. We really have to change our model to be able to deal with the challenges that we all face on a global scale. As long as we don’t recreate our own institution to develop that further, we have a legitimacy problem. In that complex interaction, I think it is great to keep on track by using the PRME network and engage in inspiring challenges. Of course, it is important to formalize and institutionalize this. In our case, every teacher must connect to the sustainable development goals agenda. This is a rule. But that does not mean that they will actually do it. So, we need to engage in learning. I agree that failing is an important lesson. If we do not allow our students to fail, why would we be able to fail ourselves?

We have to invest in the courageous and inspirational environment that I think a university should provide. We have to do it even for our own sake. The last 20 years at my university have been quite challenging. But I always got inspired. I knew that what I was doing was very relevant. The students liked it and so did some of my colleagues. At the end, we were able to come up with many interesting examples. I hope I have shared some of them with all of you.

We are off track on a global scale. We need to step up the pace. Part of the problem comes from the institutional barriers, not only in society, the government, or business, but also at universities. A solution to that is the creation of these platforms to give ourselves the best ideas and inspire each other.

### **Comment from the audience**

I have a proposal for Danica. There is a large organization called Inner Development Goals. They create an exclusive skill set for people who wish to achieve such goals. It probably makes sense to set up a partnership with them and integrate all our different skill sets, and then go in a single direction.

### **Lisa Fröhlich**

We have a lot of topics for discussion. Perhaps we should get together after this conference and think what kind of projects we can launch. I agree completely that we need to cooperate. There is so much out there. We do not need to reinvent it. Also, we should not forget the cultural context. The skills that we teach do not work in the same way everywhere.

Thank you, panelists, because you brought insights from diverse parts of the world today. We see that the world is diverse and we need to find a way to come together.

# Green Intelligence: Why Data and Artificial Intelligence Must Become More Sustainable?

## World Café Session on Modern Technologies and Their Impact on a Sustainable Future



**Christoph Stückelberger**

Founder and President of  
Globethics  
Switzerland

We are going to try to find the values and ethical frames for what we are discussing. We can have good methodology, institutional reform, and good teaching. But what is the final benchmark?

I have studied ethics from a theological and philosophical perspective. Ethics in our European tradition is based on philosophy or theology. I published my first book in 1979. It was my master thesis on sustainability and a new lifestyle. So I have participated in this debate for over 40 years. I was aware of the limits-of-growth idea of the 1970s and I wondered what could be done about it. I called it “human-centered growth”. The idea was to have growth but within acceptable limits. That has been my journey and it has always been at an international level. What can we all do about it? My books on this issue have been translated into several languages.

I tried to combine academic reflection with practical implementation. I was the director of a development organization for two decades, managing projects in the southern part of the Earth. My family set up a solar panel on our house 25 years ago. So this is not something new, happening in the past few years. We have known what we have to do for a long time. The critical question is why we do not do what we know we should do.

I calculated that if every human being on Earth had the same energy consumption, I would have used my share by the time I was 30. After that, I have lived at the expense of future generations and my conscience is busy, because I want to contribute to sustainability.

We have four children and four grandchildren. We were worried because we were creating pollution. But we were also convinced that we were also creating people who can contribute to the discovery of a solution. I am proud to say that two of our four children have PhDs in physics, with a focus on solar energy. They work with a large company, trying to find out how to increase solar energy efficiency. Therefore, I think we have made a good investment in our family. We have a generation that is following in our footsteps. This was just some personal background.

My first book, in German, was on how to create human-centered growth. Then I wrote something on sustainability ethics, published in China, in Chinese. Another book is called *We All Are Guests on Earth; A Global Vision for Climate Justice*. Somebody at lunch told me that I am a guest here. I responded that we are both guests on Earth. That is what unites us all. We are not the owners of this planet. We are using it as guests. That produces a big impact. The last one is *Globalance Toward a New World Order. Ethics Matters and Motivates*. I will refer to it and you will see how it relates to sustainability.

The explosion of data availability in recent times is unbelievable. Every second, the number of documents and data online is multiplying. We cannot imagine the speed at which this is happening. And somebody can use the data for the benefit of big companies. Who are the producers and owners of the big data? The private sector in the United States and Asia, mainly in China, as well as Korea and other countries. There is much less in Europe. If we want to influence behavior related to artificial intelligence, ethics, and sustainability, we have to see where the money is coming from and where it is going to.

There is no one single organization leading the world in terms of block chain. They have built consortiums. Some of that block chain is collapsing now or being reorganized. But the power of networks is seen here. We need to understand how banks cooperate or compete for the creation of block chain finance instruments.

Networking has a high potential, as we all know. But it also involves a high risk. What do we do if one of the network elements collapses? We know from our past experience that when there is a financial crisis in Southeast Asia, we get sick in Europe. That is because we are all connected. We experienced that after the financial crisis in the US in 2007.

We speak about artificial intelligence and ethics as part of the fourth industrial revolution. In Japan, they have teaching robots. Is that the future? Teachers are now protesting in Chicago, saying that they want fair pay and do not want jobs in the streets. There is a labor issue behind all these developments.

This leads to my second point. The huge amount of available data allows us to create knowledge at a huge speed. But what is knowledge? What do we do with it and for what reason? Knowledge is an accumulation of facts and data that can be analyzed and interpreted. We can look at causes,

effects, and interactions. Then, we can reach conclusions for decisions followed by action. Until 1900, human knowledge doubled about every 100 years. Then, it was 13 years and now, with artificial intelligence, it is every 12 hours. This is really a revolution. What does that do to our children?

Here, I come to the word “wisdom”. I learned its importance in India, where we had a conference on wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom is something very deep in India, China, and Southeast Asia. It is something that we have to come back to. We have to remember what it was. Wisdom is a holistic integration of knowledge, understanding, experience, revelation, divine inspiration from Buddha and Jesus, and ethical behavior. Wisdom is much more than knowledge. The challenge today is to produce not only knowledge but also wisdom. By the way, I found that the German word “Wissen”, just like English “wise” is akin to the Sanskrit root “ved-”, meaning “to know”.

Years ago, I interviewed Sophia, one of the first android robots. The name means “wisdom”. That is what the developers of the first robot had chosen for its name. But is that wisdom? I asked that machine some questions on ethics and it failed the exam. It had no understanding of ethics at all. Its answer was, “Yes, nice meeting you”.

However, a few months ago in Geneva there was a new robot, only five years after Sophia. The answers that robot gave us were absolutely amazing. Such a huge progress in just five years, even though I still would not call it “wisdom”. That thing is still a machine. Robots should be used as helpers not abused as wise saviors. Our brains should not be replaced by robots. Our helpers should not replace us. That is one of my messages here.

We have to combine knowledge, wisdom, and values. They have to be together. That is the core of my message. What does wisdom education mean? Promotion of proverbs, for example. What can we learn from them? Proverbs are wisdom based on thousands of years of human experience. How do we analyze proverbs and learn from them for our character education? We can promote spiritual elements in higher education teaching. I learned that in India, at a school in Bangalore. They have compulsory yoga classes. They say that you cannot be a brilliant enterprise leader without having something rooted. Buddhists and Christians can do the same. They do that at some Christian universities.

How can we integrate that as an additional element into what we discussed already? The challenge of the secular curriculum is old-fashioned. In the 21st century, we need to be holistic. We have to have a spiritual, value-oriented direction in our curriculum as a normal mainstream issue. I am sure it will not happen as it is a fantasy. But we all know what happened in Afghanistan. I agree with our colleagues from Kazakhstan who said that their country is totally different. Imagine however Kazakhs saying “Enough of this secular, globalized westernization. We need to go back to our roots and have a revolution. And women should go back home and stay there. Here, we will have the Taliban system from Afghanistan”. Imagine the horror. We can respond to this by saying that we are not against Islam or Christianity, and that it is part of our educational system, but in a rational and reasonable way, not in an extremist fashion.

My third point is about sustainability. The shortest definition of that term is not new. To sustain means to cultivate and to conserve. Allow me to quote an old text. Those who know the creation story in the Bible, which is common Jewish, Christian, and Muslim lore, know that it says that God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and conserve it. That is a perfect definition of sustainability in two words: to cultivate and conserve. What does that mean? It means that we have the right and obligation to dig the soil and produce food and technology for good living



as long as we do it in such a way that we conserve it for future generations. It is as simple as that. But it is difficult to do. It is amazing to see that this wisdom is not part of the 21st century. We are not the inventors of sustainability. We have just rediscovered it as a necessity.

Now we come to an anthropological difficulty. This is a divine view. But God does not distinguish between the divine and the rest. There is no distinction between action and reflection. I reflect and then I do something or do not do it. That is the human condition and limitation. We may want to do something but we do not implement it. Yet, the divine is always the total unity of thinking and doing. We have to ponder how we can arrive at this kind of unity that we need.

That also involves the balance between freedom and responsibility. We have the freedom to use our brain for innovation. We have excellent innovation experts here in this room. We have the capacity and freedom to innovate, as long as we do it responsibly. That means remaining sustainable across generations. Sustainable development enables a life in dignity of present generations of human and non-human beings, including plants and animals, without endangering the life and dignity of future generations of human and non-human beings.

We are discovering the benchmarks and the so-called “golden rule”. It says that you should do to others what you would want them to do to you. It is a rule of reciprocity. This humanistic motto is valid in all worldviews. All religions have this. Without it, we cannot exist. We need this rule of mutuality. We do not take it seriously because we want to dominate, to be stronger, and to compete. Competition is not bad, within limits. It is acceptable if you accept that others have the right to exist.

That takes me to my fourth point. What are these values that I am talking about? I will not go into details but I will tell you that they are shared across the globe. That is why I teach in Europe, Asia, and South America. I want to find what we have in common. These values are present in all cultures but they receive different interpretations. For example, respect in a traditional African country may be expressed differently compared to the situation in a liberal Western country.

The values are interconnected. We cannot wish for freedom, without responsibility for our actions. They belong together. Values form a balance. It is not something that we have invented recently. It has existed in major philosophies that have existed for a long time. For example in ancient Egypt, there was a goddess of balance. Buddhist philosophy also has a concept of balance and there is the Daoist Ying and Yang. We have a commandment to love others as we love God and ourselves. All these are balancing values.

We also have the sustainable development goals. We cannot have the right to vote without the right to jobs or to gender equality. They are interconnected. The same philosophy of balancing is visible here. But the balance is not easy to achieve. The world is like a river and you have to swim and adapt. That makes life difficult. You have to move every second. There is violence, COVID, old people, hungry people. It is a constant rebalancing movement.

At management schools, we have theories of change. I invite you to include this question in them: How can we balance these different views? This leads me to a few concretizations. We had a great session on research ethics this morning. The notion of holistic research was also mentioned. How can we have holistic research, integrating all these aspects? Research should be massively interdisciplinary. Last week, I visited the research department of Huawei in Beijing. At present, 56 percent of their 200,000 staff members are in research. Imagine more than 100,000 engineers de-

veloping new devices. And that is one single company. I asked them if they would have 5,000 social scientists, which is just five percent of 100,000. They would study conflict resolution and Confucianism, and how to deal with all that and integrate it into our technological development. For me, that would be holistic research. You cannot take a short course on ethics at a management school and then believe that you can teach it. That is not enough. That is one of my proposals.

I think that this business school is well positioned in the debate on private versus public. What is the role of the state and of the private sector? How can we distinguish them and how can they cooperate?

Of course, we have also to look at the investment sector. Some of you are financial experts. Geneva is called a green sustainable financial center. There is a big ongoing initiative whose goal is to make all financial companies green. That is a big political issue. How can we get the necessary investment in that? I have just made one calculation. We know that reconstructing Ukraine will cost about 500 billion US dollars. Of course, we want to reconstruct Ukraine. But, at the same time, a UNESCO report says that 114 billion US dollars would be enough to provide safe drinking water to two thirds of the Earth's population, mostly in Africa and Asia. Infrastructure is being destroyed while there is no money for life in dignity. We need to be outspoken on that. We need a green economy, not dark weapons.

We can learn from the past. I know the Bible better than Bhagavad Gita, but I know you will find this in different holy scriptures. Again, 2800 years ago, there was a war convention. You find that in the Old Testament. It says that when you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees. You may eat from them but you may not cut them down. But people are cutting down tropical forests now in order to make money. If you destroy the fields with bombs, you violate a three-thousand-year war convention. People have the right to food and those who wage war have no right to destroy the food basis of the enemy. Let us remember that this is not a new policy of 2023. It is an old wisdom and an ethical rule.

We heard that urbanization is growing even in Uzbekistan. People are leaving rural areas. That is highly relevant for sustainability.

We talked about university rankings. But I would say that the rating system of companies, and even countries, needs a revision. The triple-A ideology was good in the past but is no longer relevant today. I would call it triple-E or sustainable development goals relevance. We need to revise our benchmarks at different levels. A triple E would stand for economy, ecology, and ethics.

We also need a balance between interdependence and independence in global trade. We know that through this polarization at the moment, many countries say that they do not want to be completely dependent on other countries. They need to bring back some industries within their own borders. This is understandable, but we need to balance dependence and independence. Neither extreme is sustainable economically or environmentally.

In the Asian religious tradition, including Confucianism, which is a philosophy and not a religion, there is a deep understanding of the need to go from the ego to the self. The latter is the bigger entity. Our actions should be driven by the self and not by the ego. It is the same in the monotheist religions.

I conclude by telling you to resist the temptation to become superhuman, with or without artificial intelligence. You know this fantasy in Silicon Valley that has become something like a religion: to produce a superhuman creature. I would say that it is heresy and an insane one, too. Let us just

be modest human beings and better human beings. And then we will be united in peace.

Thank you so much.

I am now happy to give the floor to the other two speakers.

### **Andrew Beklemishev**

Vice President of International  
Data Corporation & Member  
of AlmaU Board of Trustees

Kazakhstan



First of all, let me welcome all our guests to Kazakhstan and to AlmaU, the university where I got my Master degree, and where I have the honor to serve on the board of trustees. My day job is vice-president of International Data Corporation. It is an organization that has studied everything digital for 60 years. Before we started our journey, computers took up entire building floors. We are studying everything about technology up to the present moment, including artificial intelligence and what it means in various areas, including sustainability, governance, and environment. This is what I would like to focus my presentation on. As I have only 15 minutes, I will not be able to dive too deep into the subject. But I will highlight some key things in my opinion. That will give you some food for thought. I will also propose some models that we have given to corporations, primarily the vendor community, that is working with artificial intelligence and is concerned with its impact on society.

First of all, I am starting with the idea that now it is the consumers that are driving the digital world. Because of the consumers, the businesses are jumping on this and trying to monetize. The government on the one hand is trying to take advantage of the technology itself, as we see in Kazakhstan, where there is a very developed electronic government program. But at the same time, it is trying to regulate the use of the technology, including the use of artificial intelligence, even though it is just at the beginning of this road.

These three pillars are what is shaping the digital world. Specifically in Central Asia, plus Azerbaijan, we see many different efforts to focus on modern digital technology. We have done some big studies for national governments in the region and have produced road maps. In Kazakhstan for instance, the president recently announced a strong focus on artificial intelligence, and we are going to see more strategy documents on its use in this country. At the same time, we see that big corporations have made commitments to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions, including major technology companies. Some of them are actually focusing on negative emissions, and we see that they are acting upon their commitment.

I am talking about this because we think that technology is playing a key role, insuring that we progress on the sustainable development goals agenda. According to our data, 20 percent of our respondents state that it is the job of the chief executive officer to ensure that organizations focus on environmental, social, and governance investing. But we also see that it is the technology and the data that allow us to make progress on that agenda. We can use the technology to measure emissions and to optimize this. But we also need to think about the impact that the technology is having on the environment, and I will show you why artificial intelligence significantly contributes to this.

It is important for companies to understand that a sustainable enterprise does not focus just on profit. We think that there is a triple bottom line. There is a need for considering people and the planet as well. I think this related to what professor Stükelberger said in his keynote address. There are many different ways of getting to that triple bottom line. It is important to make sure that companies implement the triple bottom line in their life cycle. That is one of the models that we have suggested for all businesses. It can be used to create a sustainable strategy for any company, and then technology can be used to implement it. It is very important for companies to understand that what matters is not just what you do in your business but the whole value chain. It is everything that an enterprise does, including the electricity that it uses and how it is acquired, for example. You need to think about all your suppliers. For technology companies, the sourcing is as important as the impact that the business can have on its consumers.

At our company, we count everything, including data. The amount of available data is growing exponentially. The data are generated by both companies and consumers. Speaking of artificial intelligence, it is very important to understand that it needs data to operate. Without data, there will be no artificial intelligence. The more data there is, the better it is for artificial intelligence. However, artificial intelligence is now contributing to the creation of even more data. It is producing vast amounts of data all the time.

To train an artificial intelligence model, you have to spend more than 40 percent of your energy resources. Then, once you start using the artificial intelligence, it will use 60 percent of your resources through lighting, cooling, and computing. But we also see that artificial intelligence models generate increasing amounts of energy.

Now, the data center industry is producing more greenhouse emissions than the entire airline industry. We are at a stage where our infatuation with data and the use of modern technology is actually generating a lot of carbon dioxide. We see that most of the energy consumed by data centers globally is coming from burning fossil fuels. We also see a desire for change and a need to shift to a more sustainable energy use, but the vast majority of the resources fueling the data centers come from fossil fuel. For example to train a Generative Pretrained Transformer 3 you need more than a megawatt of energy. That is the equivalent of 112 vehicles driving nonstop and burning gasoline for a year. The Generative Pretrained Transformer 4 requires even more energy. And this is just a very small tip of the iceberg. This is just an example of how artificial intelligence contributes to pollution worldwide.

For the vendors, such as Microsoft, Google, and others, we have developed a sustainability framework. We have given it to them and they are using it quite well. We want them to help the world become more environmentally friendly and more socially responsible and sustainable. With the necessary technology, they can do that. The model that we provide will help them achieve their goals.

## Hemachandran Kannan

Director of AI Research Centre  
Area & Chair of the Analytics  
Department, Woxsen University,  
India



Good morning, everyone. First off, let me explain what Woxsen University is. “Woxsen” stands for “World-class Extraordinary Entrepreneurs,” and that’s precisely what we aim to nurture.

Today, I’ll share some of the best practices we follow at Woxsen, particularly regarding the sustainable development goals. Over the past two to three months, we have initiated several projects across our diverse schools: Business, Technology, Design, Law, and Architecture and Planning.

When a problem statement is identified at the School of Business, our approach involves collaboration. We bring in students from Technology, Law, and Design to collectively address and solve the identified problems. While the School of Business pinpoints the problem, it’s resolved collaboratively with Technology, and the final product is crafted by Design. This collaborative model defines our approach at Woxsen.

In India, a primary concern is the large population, around 1.5 billion, leading to significant pollution. Clean energy is an imperative. Additionally, there is a shortage of educational opportunities, and we are committed to eliminating hunger. This has been our focus during the past six months.

Green intelligence, making environmentally conscious decisions, relies on data. Data and emerging technologies are pivotal in making informed decisions. In education, we emphasize personalized learning and data-driven decisions, utilizing artificial intelligence to identify student interests and tailor curricula accordingly.

Artificial intelligence aids access to education, as witnessed during COVID-19. Chatbots powered by artificial intelligence can be given to students for self-practice, addressing the challenges posed by online learning.

Artificial intelligence assists energy efficiency and the creation of renewable energy by automating systems, such as lights turning off when rooms are vacant. It also optimizes solar energy generation and controls the energy sources for cities.

Artificial intelligence extends its benefits to agriculture, providing farmers with weather and soil quality data for optimized crop suggestions, increasing production and profit.

In managing the food supply chain, artificial intelligence can automate surplus food distribution, connecting organizations with excess food to those in need.

Early warning systems, utilizing satellite data and sensors, enable better

agricultural planning, minimizing losses.

The importance of big data arises in artificial intelligence development, accessible through cloud storage. Artificial intelligence serves as a problem-solving mechanism, aiding in identification, solution-finding, resource utilization, and decision-making.

To make artificial intelligence emulate human thinking, machine learning and deep learning are of crucial importance. Machine learning algorithms, including regression and classification models, assist in complex data analysis.

Major companies, such as Google, Tesla, and IBM, are already using artificial intelligence to reduce energy consumption and emissions, and provide solutions for farmers.

However, challenges exist, such as the lack of a global regulatory body for artificial intelligence. At Woxsen, a policy task force monitors artificial intelligence implementations in partner institutions, ensuring adherence to frameworks and standards, ultimately contributing to the formulation of regulatory systems.

Artificial intelligence must follow ethical standards and avoid negative societal impacts. Woxsen practices what it preaches, implementing clean energy solutions, minimizing wastage through recycling initiatives, and promoting awareness of the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

The university has embraced innovative approaches, such as an environmental metaverse, utilizing artificial intelligence to educate students and nearby institutions about sustainable development goals.

Our commitment to quality education is reflected in a new pedagogy, incorporating a metaverse platform for course delivery, simulations, and a chatbot to aid student queries.

The future of green intelligence looks promising, with ongoing efforts to integrate emerging technologies to meet targets and reduce negative societal impacts.

## **Arnold Walravens**

**Professor at IEDC-Bled School of Management**

**Slovenia**

These final presentations were a fantastic closure to the conference. I have a question about wisdom. How exactly do you become wise? My question to the second speaker is "What can business schools do about the process of digitalization?" Finally, precision agriculture does not solve the problem of using fertilizers. You may use less fertilization but the pollution that it causes is still there. It is not green at all.

## **Christoph Stückelberger**

What is wisdom is a great question. Speaking about wisdom, my message is that we should not talk only about technology. We should also talk about anthropology. About who we are as humans. We should reflect on our possibilities and limitations. That is, I think, a more holistic approach. That also means that we should learn modesty. Some technocrats think that they have reinvented the wheel of the world. We should be modest, acknowledging that technology gives us huge possibilities, but the fundamental questions remain the same as 3000 years ago. The main question with respect to technology is how to use it for a good purpose, not for domination and distraction. That is an anthropological question, not a technical one.



I am not a technoskeptic. On the contrary, I think technology is important. But it should not blind us and make us believe that it can solve our problems. Only we, the human beings, can solve our problems. Technology can only provide support.

### **Andrew Beklemishev**

Before I answer my question, I would like to make a brief comment on the previous one. I would like to share a case that a friend of mine, who is a lawyer, learned from a friend of his, practicing law in the United States. He was preparing for a court case and asked an artificial intelligence device to prepare some statements and collected the response. He went to court and he lost. Moreover, he got fined because one of the cases that was referenced had been made up by the artificial intelligence device. The thing is that when artificial intelligence cannot find some information that it needs, it invents it based on available data. Now think what happens if other models are allowed to learn this false information. This is a question of artificial intelligence wisdom and what it can mean for mankind as a whole. This is something to think about.

I said in my presentation that technology can help us advance toward the sustainable development goals. On the one hand, it contributes to pollution and the more intensively we use the data centers, the more pollution there will be. But on the other hand we can use the technology to reduce our negative impact. What can business schools do about all that? They can inform students about both possibilities through case studies. At business schools, we should teach more real cases and rely less on hypothetical scenarios. The key question is how professors can keep up with what is going on. Some 20 years ago, the changes in the development of technology were not as fast as today. At present, we see new things come out every month. It is hard even for technology companies to keep track of what is happening.

### **Hemachandran Kannan**

There are fertilizers of different quality and artificial intelligence can help assess that quality. It can determine if a fertilizer can be used on a particular farm or not. It is a matter of having the right data about the fertilizers. Then, artificial intelligence can do an analysis and provide you with an evaluation of the fertilizer's quality.

### **Comment from the audience**

Here in Kazakhstan, they have a list of qualities that define a Kazakh. One of them is spirituality. They also mention ethics and understanding their nomadic past. Interestingly, they integrate that in their formal education system. I do not know if they do it at universities, though. It would be interesting to see how those concepts can be integrated in business management education.

My question now is "What good examples can you share with us from countries where you worked?"

## **Xiaobo Wu**

Director of National Institute for Innovation Management,  
Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, Zhejiang University,  
CEEMAN Vice-President for China

China

My understanding is that wisdom is different from intelligence. Wisdom is not as clear as hard knowledge. Therefore, it may be difficult for a machine to get the idea of wisdom. I think that wisdom is the last domain that a human being can excel in. What would happen if a machine had wisdom? Maybe some disasters for us. What is your view on that?

## **Christoph Stückelberger**

We can learn a lot from traditional cultures. I think that there is an awareness that we are not the first who can think. We can learn from each other and also from those before us without necessarily becoming backward. There are people who get nostalgic about the past and say that 1000 years ago the world was better. But that is not the right message. We have to respect diversity. In many countries, people are asking what they can learn from the traditional wisdom of their nation. It would be interesting to share that. At Globethics, we have a large online library with publications on ethics, containing four million documents. Let us collect traditional wisdom from all over the world. That would be an interesting project. We can share the collection and use it in education. That would not mean that we are not future-oriented. The future can be sustainable only if it is not decoupled from the past. That is a lesson I learned in Asia.

We are only beginning to reflect on wisdom. Even for me, the relationship between wisdom and knowledge is not quite clear. I emphasize the religious part of ethics although I am very much in favor of non-religious ethics. Of course, the majority of human beings are still religious but those of the young generation say that religion is not their world. That is fine. What unites us is the goal to be human, regardless of our religious or secular background.

In China, they have wisdom education, based on Confucius. I do not think we should delegate this to a machine and teach it how to be wise. A machine can do a lot and the next generation will be able to do much more than now, but why not use our human brain in a narrative tradition? Story-telling is a powerful way of translating and transmitting wisdom over centuries. That is why proverbs are important. Every culture has thousands of years of oral tradition. We have to rediscover all that. I think it would be very fruitful to deepen this discussion, especially because all of our cultures can contribute to that.

# Closing Observations by the Conference Chair

## **Gulnara Kurenkeyeva**

Rector of Almaty  
Management University,  
AMBA & BGA the  
International Accreditation  
Advisory Board Member  
Kazakhstan



It is a tough job to close a conference when everybody is tired. This was an incredible journey. We used many different angles on sustainability. We started with a focus on strategy and how it can be implemented in research and in university curricula. The most interesting thing was that we had speakers and moderators from 25 countries. They have different backgrounds but were united by our common passion for advancing business education and leadership. Through these discussions we create common values. We develop a sustainability agenda, and not just for our university curricula. We also talk about its implementation in the agenda of our societies. That was the most important part of our discussion.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the organizers, speakers, and sponsors of this conference. I am thankful to all who worked tirelessly to make it a success. Special thanks to all our CEEMAN friends and partners. Thank you for the great job that you have done.

# Gender-Biased Employee Selection in Kazakhstan - The First Scientific Research

*Network Dissemination Project of the EURAM European Academy of Management Conference Paper, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, June 2023*

**Anastassiya Lipovka**  
**Zoltan Buzady**



## Abstract

We present the current HR selection practices in Kazakhstan, a post-socialist country in Central Asia with the highest gender equality index. Despite the new antidiscrimination legislative rules, patriarchic gender views prevail in Kazakh society. Our research applies the grounded theory of gender-biased selection. We examine the key factors of gender discrimination in Kazakhstan. The findings show that cultural factors are stronger in companies and organizations than the raters' influence and evaluation. Personal aspects are crucial. In the case of women, it is their reproductive age. For men, bias is stronger

against those older than 30 years. Also, workers with lower qualifications suffer more massively from gender bias compared to sought-after experts. Men are more likely to be hired for traditionally male professions as well as managerial positions. Women are likelier to be hired for typical female and for labor-intensive jobs. Finally, we suggest that researchers, decision-makers, and concerned employers adopt modern selection practices policies at the strategic level so as to be better positioned to utilize the diversity of Kazakhstan's full workforce.

Our work is the first scientific research in Central Asia outlining the deeper functioning and context of gender bias minimization among HR managers.

## Introduction

Kazakhstan offers a totally new area for research on gender equality, as the Central Asian country subscribed to the new UN Sustainable Development Goals, and began to implement those in its legislature. The objective of our presentation is to fill the international research gap: we define how and why HRM practices in Kazakhstan are actually a gender-biased selection process (Lipovka & Buzady, 2020; Yanovskaya & Lipovka, 2022).

## Literature review

Kazakhstan's HRM mostly focuses on short-term HRM strategies, resulting in ineffective selection practices. Many local firms have not yet practiced modern strategic HRM, including recruitment and selection strategies. The level of Kazakhstan's economic development and the presence of many

large MNCs in the country call for advanced and strategic HRM, able to build a competitive advantage. Training and development, recruitment and selection, and performance appraisal were mentioned as the most important by 33.1 % of Kazakhstani MNCs managers, while strategic issues were less important (29.3%) (Poór et al., 2017). In the cross-cultural study of MNCs-subsidiaries, Kazakhstan HRs outlined employee relations, communication, and HR planning and compensation as the most critical problems, whereas HRs from the post-socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe mentioned recruitment and selection (Poór et al, 2020).

## **Research Methodology**

We decided to apply a qualitative research methodology: taking interview notes, conducting in-depth conversations, and compiling a reflective journal about participants' behavior, and their nonverbal language for 17 candidate HR professionals working for private Kazakhstan companies and MNCs, plus three interviews with the heads of HR in charge of the recruiting function.

## **Discussion**

Our research revealed that the HR leaders' gender stereotypes played a vital role in their selection procedures.

Sadly, gender discrimination during the selection of employees at the sampled enterprises showed a persisting pattern. Often private characteristics, mostly gender and family status of applicants, were deemed more important for selection than their professional qualities.

We show that Kazakh culture and leaders' influences on their colleagues canceled the positive attempts of HR training and the bias became explicit.

During the interview process, deep-rooted cultural traditions of exploring the candidates' personal life circumstances, including their marital status, marriage plans and family planning concepts, other responsibilities, and their husbands' attitudes toward their employment application, were not affected by the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation norms.

In contrast to other countries, in Kazakhstan the women's and men's family status is highly important in organizational hiring. The family as a fundamental institution (considering the patriarchal vision of gender roles in Kazakhstan) has a critical influence on companies' selection practices, combined with the imperfect enforcement of new laws on anti-discrimination. Most importantly, we identified a serious lack of a strategic approach to new employee selection. HR managers merely saw it as a type of daily routine, instead of a key element of strategic HRM. Kazakh decision-makers aim to avoid risk by filling in job vacancies with what they deem to be "matching" strategies in selection.

## **Implications for organizations, policymakers, and scholars**

The systemic challenges during the HR selection process, which we have discovered, need to be addressed by top management of local companies and MNCs in Kazakhstan, as well as by policy and lawmakers, and further explored by scholars. The challenge of gender-biased selection might be alleviated by a more formal and transparent recruitment and selection methodology, which describes the clear requirements and the criteria of the selection technique applied. The research was conducted by studying the experience and behavior of perpetrators of gender discrimination - HRs and heads of recruiting agencies. The focus on exploring, documenting, and analyzing their subjective experiences, feelings, and the root causes of their discriminatory actions.

The main theoretical contribution we make is the investigation and analysis of hiring biases. Our work reveals the grounds of gender bias in private local companies and MNCs in Kazakhstan.

## Conclusion

Gender stereotypes are a significant barrier to gender equality. This is the situation in post-socialist countries of Central Asia, and Kazakhstan, which face the challenge to balance new gender policies of international requirements and trends against the persistence and actual revival of fundamental, national cultural traditions. We have demonstrated in our interview-based research methodology that gender-biased selection is a result of patriarchal social roles, characteristic of daily HRM operations. It is part of the international gender equality research. Our presentation showed a range of explanations given to justify unethical and illegal behavior. The existing practices aim to lower the risk of the employee leaving and to save time. It is claimed that a private company has the right to adopt "its own selection and hiring rules" to identify the most suitable candidates. The stereotyped-based discrimination mentality and the entailing HRM practices - widely used by local enterprises and less regularly by MNCs that we have studied - are used to attain short-term selection goals. In reality, however, these practices render them a disservice by losing the best future talents and undermine the diversity potential of the workforce. Thus, it is a negative practice viewed from a strategic perspective. The antidiscrimination laws of Kazakhstan do not bring the realization of the UN SDG closer, and do not contribute to the development of its competitiveness in the global arena of the emerging multipolar world.

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# Sustainability vs. Crisis: Examining the Impact of COVID-19 and Other Recent Crises on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability Regarding Relationships Between For-Profit and Non-Profit Organizations.

**Jennifer A. Pope**  
**Moumita Acharyya**  
**Rok Ramšak**

This study examines the relationship between organizations' CSR and NPOs and how COVID-19 and other crises in the world today have changed that. The first study examines the differences between India and the United States. The rationale was that India and the US were two of the hardest-hit countries regarding COVID. These two countries ranked number one and two in number of confirmed cases in 2022 and were in the top three as to number of confirmed deaths at the time. (The Visual and Data Journalism Team, 2022). Both countries also had leaders that downplayed the severity of the virus. We decided to examine the impact (good or bad) of COVID 19 on companies' CSR and sustainability programs. We also wanted to look at the impact on NGOs (NPOs) and their relationships with for-profit organizations. Based on the literature, we developed two research questions:

1. Were companies and NGOs that had already built sustainability and innovation into their business structure better prepared to handle the COVID-19 and economic crisis and in what way?
2. How did COVID-19 and the economic crisis change the relationship between for-profit organizations' CSR/sustainability programs and NGOs?

Literature showed that larger companies often did not curtail their CSR programs, but smaller companies had to. Literature also showed that NPOs were struggling to either stay open or meet increasing demand for their services while maintaining safety protocols.

Questions were developed using the literature and reviewed by external sources. We interviewed for-profit and NPOs in both India and the US. We started with personal contacts and used the snowball method to gather more interviews. A graduate assistant did the first round of coding based on a-priori codes we developed from the literature.

We found that firms (for profit or non-profit) that have prior experience in sustainable innovations or innovation eco-systems or frugal innovations, are better placed to respond quicker in crisis situations with simultaneous demand and supply shock.

Results showed that the NPOs, depending on the service they provided, either showed a sharp increase in demand for their services or had to change how they provided their services significantly. However, each NPO



we interviewed found a way to survive if not thrive. They had to change their did fundraising methods and their sources of support from. Some changes were found to improve customer service and the NPO plans to keep the changes. Not all NPOs were so lucky.

1. NPOs that had memberships sometimes saw the memberships fall.
2. NPOs had to curtail services or change delivery methods.
3. NPOs saw a drop in volunteers and had to lay off employees.
4. NPOs focused more on meeting short-term needs than long-term solutions.
5. NPOs with innovative leadership did better during COVID than those that did not.
6. COVID accelerated the use of technology in NPOs.
7. COVID forced NPOs to take a close look at partnerships.

For-profit organizations faced some of the same challenges.

1. FPOs had to lay off employees or change the way they did their work.
2. FPOs had to change the way they evaluated their employees.
3. FPOs and NPOs had to adjust working situations to ensure employee and client safety.
4. FPOs took a hard look at their partnerships with NPOs to see what was working and what was not.
5. FPOs and NPOs created flexible working schedules — some of which has carried over to the present day.
6. There was more focus on mental health than before COVID.
7. FPOs struggled to keep employees connected to the firm and other employees. Virtual meetings only went so far.

Since Europe has dealt with multiple crises in the past three years, we thought it would be interesting to look at sustainability and CSR in the CEE region. We also want to include the role of NGOs. The idea is to examine not only the impact of COVID but also the other recent social crises in Europe, such as the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis and inflation.

The questions were modified to fit the region and we decided to add expert analysis to the mix. Questions were reviewed by a sustainability expert as well. Changes were made based on her suggestions. Methodology will remain the same, using a-priori codes to analyze the data. We are currently in the process of recruiting for interviews right now.

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# From Bagan to Angkor Wat: How Thazin Saved Myanmar's Traditional Artwork and Became an Inspiring Entrepreneur

**Dr. Zina Kyriakou**

**Ms.Selvi@Thazin Win**

**Capt. Aung Myin Moe**

**Mr. Munna @ Saka Bahadur**

**Mr.Aung Moe Thant**

Thazin is a young and ambitious woman who loves her country and its culture. She has always dreamed of sharing the beauty and diversity of Myanmar's traditional art with the world. She worked in the tourism industry for many years, helping visitors discover the amazing hand artwork at Bagan, the

ancient city of temples. She was proud of her job and enjoyed meeting people from different countries and backgrounds.

But everything changed when COVID-19 hit the world in 2020. The pandemic brought travel restrictions, lockdowns, and economic hardships. Thazin's tourism business suffered a huge loss as the number of visitors dropped drastically. She tried to adapt to the new situation, but things got worse when political instability and violence erupted in Myanmar in 2021. Thazin's tourism business was shrinking, and she had to sell tickets for a while.

Thazin was well-trained by her father and could deal with the hard situation in Myanmar. She also felt sorry for the artists and craftsmen who depended on tourism for their livelihood. She knew many of

them had to give up their artwork and explore business opportunities in other countries. She feared that the traditional artwork of Myanmar, such as lacquerware, jade, and gem portraits, would be lost forever.

Thazin decided to do something about it. She wanted to preserve and promote the traditional artwork of Myanmar, as well as help the artists and craftsmen who were struggling. Motivated by a profound desire to preserve her heritage, Thazin embarked on an audacious venture. Guided by her Master's and Ph.D.

pursuits, she considered becoming an entrepreneur. She did some research and found that there were some opportunities in other countries in Southeast Asia, where tourism was recovering faster than in Myanmar. She looked for a place where she could set up a small business that would sell

Myanmar's traditional artwork to tourists. She considered Thailand, but she found that it was too expensive and complicated to start a business there. She needed a local partner and a lot of money to get a license and rent a shop. She also faced some competition from other sellers of similar products.



Thazin then discovered Cambodia, a neighbouring country with a rich history and culture, as well as a booming tourism industry. Her gaze turned to Cambodia's Angkor Wat – a vast compound of temples reminiscent of those in Myanmar. She thought that Angkor Wat was a perfect place to showcase Myanmar's traditional artwork, as the two cultures had some similarities in style and theme and some differences that made them unique.

and interesting. Thazin contacted some friends and relatives who had connections in Cambodia. They helped her find a suitable location near Angkor Wat, where she could rent a small shop at a reasonable price. They also helped her get the necessary permits and documents to start her business legally.

Thazin then contacted some of the artists and craftsmen in Bagan, to whom she used to send tourists. She provided them an opportunity to supply her with artwork to sell in Cambodia. She promised them fair prices. Many of them agreed to supply her, as they saw it as an opportunity to escape from the troubles in Myanmar and earn some income. They started to supply her.

Thazin named her shop "Myanmar Handicraft". Her focus was on "Yunde", which means "lacquerware", because that is one of the most distinctive and elegant forms of traditional artwork in Myanmar. The objects are made from bamboo or wood coated with layers of lacquer resin mixed with pigments, gold leaf, or other materials. They can be bowls, plates, boxes, statues, or decorations. They are also associated with royalty, religion, and culture.

Thazin displayed various kinds of lacquerware products in her shop, along with jade and gem portraits that depicted scenes from Myanmar's history, mythology, or nature. She also added some other items that reflected Myanmar's diversity, such as textiles, puppets, masks, and musical instruments. Thazin's shop soon attracted many tourists who visited Angkor Wat. They were curious about the products that she sold and asked her questions about them. She explained to them each product's meaning, origin,

and process. She also told them stories about Myanmar's culture, history, and people. She spoke with passion and enthusiasm, making the tourists feel interested and impressed. The tourists bought many products from Thazin's shop, as they found them beautiful, unique, and valuable. They also appreciated Thazin's knowledge and service.

Once Thazin's business grows steadily, she is planning to hire more staff to help her run the shop and serve the customers. She also expanded her network of suppliers and partners in Myanmar and Cambodia. She increased her product range and quality by adding more designs, colors, and materials.

Thazin was happy with her success. She felt that she had achieved her dream of sharing Myanmar's traditional artwork with the world. She also felt that she had helped the artists and craftsmen who worked with her, as well as their families and communities. She hopes that one day she can return to

Myanmar and continue her business there when the situation improve, and peace has been restored.

Thazin's story is an inspiring example of how one can overcome challenges and difficulties and turn them into opportunities and achievements. She shows how one can preserve and promote one's culture and heritage, while also adapting to new environments and markets. She also shows how one can help others and positively impact society. Thazin is a role model for anyone who wants to follow a passion and make dreams come true.

# Meaningful Life: Flow-Happiness in Kazakh Fine Art

**Zoltan Buzady**

## **Abstract**

I present the core elements of the flow phenomenon, which is a central concept of positive psychology and a possible answer to what makes modern life meaningful. I explore how some characteristics are portrayed in pertinent masterpieces of Kazakh fine art, displayed in the Ablikhan Kasteyev Museum in Almaty.

## **Introduction**

The science of positive psychology was co-founded by the Hungarian-American psychologist Prof. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. He is the founder of happiness studies and creativity. As a serial global best-selling author, he identified in extensive empirical research the optimal experience a person can have during the course of a day: the mental state of flow.

## **What about Kazak art?**

Traditionally, Kazakhs were nomads. Thus, most of their art is applied art (jewelry, decoration of practical objects, patterned horse harnesses). Tradition was conveyed through carpet weaving, pottery, and leatherwork. Nowadays, the art of Kazakhstan includes unique architecture, fine arts, and sculptures.

## **What about fine art in Kazakhstan?**

In Kazakhstan, fine art, in the classical sense of the term, had its origins in the 19th century. Russian artists, who traveled in Central Asia, had a particular influence on the development of the local school of painting. The most famous artist is Abilkhan Kasteyev, whose name was given to the State Museum of Art of Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh school of art was fully formed by the 1940's, with painters, trained under the unified Soviet system of artist education, often using national motifs. An avant-garde movement arose in the late 1980s, aimed to find fresh ideas and protests against established Soviet art. Their works exemplify a revival of interest in Kazakh folklore and the ornamental style of a range of historical, regional and cultural traditions.

## **What constitutes a meaningful life?**

This most fundamental question of life can be approached from various viewpoints. They include religion, family and friendship, science, fame or power, wealth or health, embeddedness, friends, beauty, art, education, and political impact.



## **What is the Kokpar game?**

Kokpar (goat-pulling) is the traditional national sport of Central Asians. Two horse-mounted player teams (tribes) attempt to place a beheaded goat beyond the opponents' goal line. It requires mastery, fitness, creativity and team-spirit, and much resilience. Kokpar is the perfect embodiment of the individual, team and organizational flow.

## **What drives people to play this dangerous game?**

What really motivates the participants is to be part of the competition. Winning the game award is just an excuse. Participation is driven by the inner urge to feel the flow and be a part of the whole.

## **How can one recognize the flow state?**

There are universal characteristics of flow:

1. Loss of one's ego
2. A sense of time passing by
3. A feeling of being in control of your actions
4. Only the present moment matters, not the past or the future
5. A feeling that everything is just perfect

## **How can one find flow and get into the zone?**

There are four universal prerequisites for flow:

1. Set a clear goal
2. Get immediate feedback from your activity
3. Find the balance between your skills and the challenge at hand
4. Focus on the activity

## **What are the key lessons for leadership training and management education?**

Flow is not about being passive. It is a type of happiness that we feel when we are active. It creates meaning in life. Flow is not mystic. It can be measured and replicated scientifically. Flow exists in all human creativity and art. It leads to top performance and productivity. Flow brings innovations to the work process. It creates psychological capital needed for team success and organizational growth.

What is the benefit of fligby, Csikszentmihalyi's serious game ([www.fligby.com](http://www.fligby.com)):

1. It provides flow leadership practice
2. It enhances 29 leadership skills
3. Builds good business values.

The full text of all our academic publications, and free teaching and research resources are available at <https://flowleadership.org/publications/>

May the flow be with you!



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Landways International

## **Belgium**

Antwerp Management School

## **China**

Changzhou University

Hohai University

Shandong Agricultural University

Zhejiang University

## **France**

International Education Society

Montpellier Business School

## **Germany**

HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management

## **Hungary**

Corvinus University of Budapest

## **India**

Birla Institute of Management Technology

Woxsen University

## **Kazakhstan**

Almaty Management University

Sustainable Innovation and Technology Foundation

Chamber of Commerce and Industry France Kazakhstan

The United Nations Kazakhstan

ETS Global

International Data Corporation

Kusto Group

Narxoz University  
UN Global Compact in Kazakhstan  
TOO “Kazakh alpine club”

## **Kyrgyzstan**

American University of Central Asia

## **Latvia**

RISEBA University

## **Netherlands**

Rotterdam School of Management

## **Poland**

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Lazarski University  
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University of Economics and Human Sciences in Warsaw  
University of Economics in Katowice

## **Romania**

Bucharest University of Economic Studies

## **Singapore**

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Arizona State University

## **Uzbekistan**

Kimyo International University in Tashkent

TEAM University

# About the organisation

## CEEMAN – the International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies

### **Your Window to Management Development in a World in Transition**



**CEEMAN**

CEEMAN is the International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies, which was established in 1993 with the aim of accelerating the growth and quality of management development in Central and Eastern Europe. Gradually, CEEMAN has become a global network of management development institutions working mainly in emerging markets and transition economies. The organization's interests cover the quality of education, research and innovation in these economies, as well as the broad range of subjects related to change and development.

With professional excellence as its aim, CEEMAN fosters the quality of management development and change processes by developing education, research, consulting, information, networking support, and other related services for management development institutions and corporations operating in transitional and dynamically changing environments. Its holistic approach to the phenomena of change and leadership development celebrates innovation, creativity and respect for cultural values.

### **CEEMAN's objectives are**

- to improve the quality of management and leadership development in general and in countries undergoing transition and dynamic change in particular
- to provide a network and meeting place for management schools and other management development institutions in order to promote and facilitate cooperation and the exchange of experience
- to provide a platform for dialogue, mutual cooperation and learning between management development institutions and businesses that are operating in the context of transition and dynamic change
- to promote leadership for change, global competitiveness and social responsibility, innovation and creativity, and respect for cultural values
- to represent the interests of its members in other constituencies

### **The main activities of the association include**

- International conferences
- Educational programs to strengthen teaching, research, management, and leadership capabilities in management schools
- Case writing support
- International research
- Publishing
- International quality accreditation of business schools

CEEMAN has close to 200 members from 49 countries in Europe, North America, Africa, Latin America and Asia.

**[www.ceeman.org](http://www.ceeman.org)**

# About Almaty Management University (AlmaU)

## **Almaty Management University**

(established in 1988, AlmaU, Almaty, Kazakhstan) is an entrepreneurial, socially responsible university that strives to become a globally recognized university with a broad development profile (comprehensive) for people striving for sustainable development society. The university cooperates with more than 150 universities and associations around the world. AlmaU is committed to the principles of the third mission, the UN SDGs, promotes the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) and the UN Academic Impact.



AlmaU is accredited by IQA CEEMAN (2010-2022), Graduate School of Business and School of Hospitality and Tourism of AlmaU are accredited by international accreditation BGA (2021-2026). The university is in the top 3 business schools in Central Asia in the Eduniversal ranking, ranks 1001+ in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022. AlmaU is the only higher education institution in Central Asia whose MBA programs are accredited by AMBA (2013-2026). GSB AlmaU is in the top 250 best business schools in the world and in the top 40 in Asia according to the QS World University Rankings: Global MBA Rankings 2023, the AlmaU EMBA program takes 23rd place in the QS Executive MBA 2022: Joint programs (and 2 ranks in the world in terms of alumni profile).

Since the beginning of 2021, AlmaU has been a member of the Cintana Education Alliance, a global network of universities, and a partner of Arizona State University, jointly implementing a long-term strategic partnership. The academic partnership is aimed at creating and scaling high-quality educational programs in the region.

**[www.almau.edu.kz](http://www.almau.edu.kz)**

# Previous CEEMAN Annual Conferences

- 2022    The Future of Management Education – Understanding the Big Picture**  
Bled, Slovenia
- 2021    Management Education at the Crossroads**  
Trieste, Italy
- 2020    Ideas and Inspiration for Management Development from Fields Beyond Management**  
Online
- 2019    Management Education for a Changing World**  
Wrocław, Poland
- 2018    Redefining Management Education: Excellence and Relevance**  
Prague, Czech Republic
- 2017    Rethinking Entrepreneurship: Challenges for Management Education in Rising Economies**  
Hangzhou, China
- 2016    Management Education for a Digital World**  
Tallinn, Estonia
- 2015    Localization vs. Globalization of Management Development in Dynamic Societies**  
Almaty, Kazakhstan
- 2014    When, Why and How Is Technology Reshaping Management Education?**  
Budapest, Hungary
- 2013    Business Schools as Responsible Change Agents: From Transition to Transformation**  
Bled, Slovenia
- 2012    Business and Educational Challenges in Dynamically Changing Environments**  
Bellville, South Africa
- 2011    Management Education in a Changing World: Are We Ready for the Challenge?**  
Tbilisi, Georgia
- 2010    New Global Performance Challenges and Implications for Management Development**  
Caserta/Naples, Italy
- 2009    Local Responses to Global Crisis**  
Riga, Latvia
- 2008    Management Education for the Realities of Emerging Markets**  
Tirana, Albania
- 2007    Globalization and Its Implications for Management Development**  
Istanbul, Turkey
- 2006    Creating Synergy between Business Schools and Business**  
Berlin, Germany
- 2005    Innovations in Management Development and New Challenges of Faculty Development**  
Kiev, Ukraine



- 2004      Enlargement of the EU and Its Impact on Management Development**  
St Petersburg, Russia
- 2003      Business Co-operation and Business Schools Co-operation: New Opportunities within CEEMAN**  
Sofia, Bulgaria
- 2002      Leadership and our Future Society**  
Bled, Slovenia
- 2001      International University Center**  
Dubrovnik, Croatia
- 2000      Entrepreneurship on the Wave of Change: Implications for Management Development**  
Trieste, Italy
- 1999      European Diversity and Integration: Implications for Management Development**  
Budapest, Hungary
- 1998      Transformational Leadership - The Challenge for Management Development in Central and Eastern Europe**  
Riga, Latvia
- 1997      Developing and Mobilizing East and Central Europe's Human Potential for Management**  
Sinaia, Romania
- 1996      Managing in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Stage II**  
Prague, Czech Republic
- 1995      From Restructuring to Continuous Improvement - Lessons from the Best-Run Companies**  
St Petersburg, Russia
- 1994      East-West Business Partnerships**  
Warsaw, Poland
- 1993      Management Development in Central and Eastern Europe**  
Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia

# Let's Grow Together!

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## Program Management Seminar

10-12 April 2024, Bled, Slovenia  
In person



Recommended for **program managers, coordinators, directors** and **institutional leaders**. With the goal to achieve operational excellence, the seminar covers a wide range of topics including marketing and admissions, working with participants and faculty, performance management, post-program activities and alumni relations as well as ethical dilemmas in a program manager's work.

[www.ceeman.org/pms](http://www.ceeman.org/pms)

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## IMTA – International Management Teachers Academy

Second half of June 2024, Bled, Slovenia  
In person



A unique **international faculty development program** led by highly experienced and renowned management education experts. Part 1 focuses on **general aspects** of teaching and learning, effective teaching strategies, course design, case teaching and writing, class management and assessment. Part 2 offers a selection of **disciplinary tracks** with practical teaching tools.

[www.ceeman.org/imta](http://www.ceeman.org/imta)

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## 32<sup>nd</sup> CEEMAN Annual Conference

September 2024  
In person

**CEEMAN's signature event** brings together deans and directors of its member and partner organizations from all over the world, focusing on topics of key importance for management development. Featuring outstanding keynotes, presentations and interactive roundtables from academia and business, the Conference also includes side events such as company visits, a poster session for faculty and researchers, Dean2Dean advisory meetings, accreditation sessions, and the CEEMAN Annual Meeting.

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## EdTech Seminar

January 2025

Bled, Slovenia

In person



EdTech is here to **help faculty members raise the quality** of their online teaching performance, as well as improve student experience and learning outcomes **in online or hybrid environment**. Constantly monitoring the evolution of teaching needs and best practices from one semester to the next, the seminar is targeting the current challenges and those immediately ahead of us with the program's focus on inter-activity and co-creation, and practical hands-on format with tangible and immediate application.

[www.ceeman.org/edtech](http://www.ceeman.org/edtech)

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## CEEMAN & Emerald Case Writing Competition

Encouraging and promoting the development of high-quality teaching case material and the development of case-writing capabilities in dynamic and emerging economies in cooperation with Emerald Publishing.

[www.ceeman.org/cwc](http://www.ceeman.org/cwc)

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## CEEMAN Champion Awards

Nominate your colleagues and their accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research, responsible management education (sustainability) and institutional management (leadership).

[www.ceeman.org/awards](http://www.ceeman.org/awards)

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## CEEMAN IQA accreditation

CEEMAN IQA accreditation aims to enhance management education through a unique accreditation process which emphasizes high quality standards, the relevance of an institution's activities in responding to meeting the development needs of its customers and markets, and the imperative of change and innovation. All three are considered essential criteria for accreditation in meeting the development demands of the rapidly changing world of executive practice.

[www.ceeman.org/iqa](http://www.ceeman.org/iqa)

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# Alliance of Management Development Associations in Rising Economies



## Alliance of Management Development Associations in Rising Economies

Following the initiative of CEEMAN, the **Alliance of Management Development Associations in Rising Economies** was established at the 27<sup>th</sup> CEEMAN Annual Conference in 2019 by representatives of **AABS** – Association of African Business Schools; **ANGRAD** – the National Association of Business Administration Undergraduate Courses of Brazil; **BMDA** – Baltic Management Development Association; **CEEMAN** – the International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies; **CLADEA** – the Latin American Council of Management Schools; **FORUM** – the Association of Management Education in Poland; and **RABE** – Russian Association of Business Education.

This partnership signals a new era of cooperation among business schools in rising economies who share similar values and challenges, with the aim to create synergies and bigger impact on management education around the world. The Alliance is intended to add value to management schools located in rising economies around the world by providing new opportunities for associations to work closely together. Within schools, key segments include rectors, deans, directors and management teams, faculty, students and alumni.

For the period of 2021-2022, CEEMAN President Danica Purg had been selected as the Alliance President, and the Alliance headquarters were located in CEEMAN during this time.

Alliance offerings will be designed to augment those provided by partner associations. Examples of service opportunities include:

- Connecting member schools across the world both in person and digitally
- Designing interventions to generate insights that will enable members to strengthen their regional positions
- Enabling member schools to conduct comparative and joint research and publications
- Enlarging accreditation possibilities to enable schools accredited by Alliance member accreditation organizations which meet an agreed common standard (to be set by the Alliance Board) to obtain recognition across all member rising economies
- Accelerating faculty and student exchange across rising economies
- Promoting partner associations, programs and events to all members
- Providing regular opportunities for deans/directors from rising economies to engage in projects of common interest.

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



**Proceedings of the 31<sup>st</sup> CEEMAN Annual Conference**

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