

# CEMS MAGAZINE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

THE SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT ISSUE

# THE WAY TO A GREENER ECONOMY

The CEMS community explores the impact of the UN Sustainable Development Goals on business leadership and the creation of radical new business models

#### SUSTAINABILITY: CLOSING THE CIRCLE

What does it take to tackle the most pressing challenges to sustainability and sustainable development?

#### THE RELUCTANT SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

What do you get when you mix mobile phones, photographs and artificial intelligence with a rain forest in Borneo?

#### REFUGEES: THE INTEGRATION GAME

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A GLOBAL BRIDGE BETWEEN THE  
CORPORATE AND ACADEMIC WORLD



# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUE

## CEMS MAGAZINE 2019

THE MAGAZINE OF THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Founded in 1988, CEMS is a global alliance of 32 business schools and universities collaborating with over 70 industry-leading multi-national corporations, 7 NGOs and over 14,000 alumni to deliver the renowned CEMS Master's in International Management.

CEMS is dedicated to educating and preparing future generations of global business leaders to enter into a multilingual, multicultural and interconnected business world.

CEMS promotes global citizenship, with a particular emphasis on these values: The pursuit of excellence with high standards of performance and ethical conduct; Understanding and drawing upon cultural diversity with respect and empathy; Professional responsibility and accountability in relation to society as a whole.

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# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUE

CEMS MAGAZINE / 2019 ISSUE

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a broad set of objectives that together represent an all-encompassing effort to tackle the issues we face as a global society.

They are a call to action. A critical imperative to drive advancement for all of humankind, fulfilling the needs of everyone on the planet in a way that cannot not impede future generations.

As a blueprint for sustainable progress, addressing inequality, climate prosperity, peace, justice and the alleviation of poverty and environmental degradation, the UN SDGs resonate deeply with the CEMS mission. In particular, they dovetail with our core values:

- The pursuit of excellence with high standards of performance and ethical conduct
- Understanding and drawing upon cultural diversity with respect and empathy
- Professional responsibility and accountability in relation to society as a whole.

Stefan Tschauko of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Boston is a researcher whose work focuses on branding within the UN System. As a CEMS graduate who has worked at CEMS social partner UN Alliance of Civilizations and subsequently conducted research within the UN's global communications department, he can also personally attest to the shared values that drive both organisations and undergird their activities across many spheres.

For him, the SDGs are an easy gateway into the complex and critically important work of the United Nations.

CEMS and other providers of business education have a responsibility, says Tschauko, to prioritise the debate on sustainability. "CEMS is a window onto the world and the biggest issues we face. Business programs have a duty to build awareness about the impact of business

activities and to shine a light on the complex web of social, economic, and environmental challenges; and to create opportunities for graduates – the business leaders of tomorrow – to find and to deliver sustainable solutions for all segments of society."

This issue of the CEMS Magazine honours that duty, and highlights the work of pioneering students, alumni and faculty around the world to advance the United National Sustainable Development Goals.

We look at the work of CEMS alumni who have started up their own enterprises; taking a very novel approach to environmental issues and human wellbeing while leveraging resources as diverse as artificial intelligence and potted plants. We hear from the Hungarian school that is serving up more than lessons in pursuit of sustainability. From Zambia and Kenya to Cambodia, we discover what enterprising CEMSies are doing to drive inclusion, from off-grid electricity generation to writing books for school curricula, from mould-breaking learning experiences to pro bono consultancy opportunities that deliver unique benefits to all. We explore the work of social entrepreneurs tackling the social and professional integration of refugees, and ask what more can be done to transform a crisis situation into a context that fosters learning and cooperation. And we look at the work of one "reluctant" social entrepreneur who is turning the forests of Borneo green in his fight against climate change.

As Stefan Tschauko says: "Businesses have a huge impact on society through the services they create, the clients they serve and the way that they operate. The challenge for businesses is to grow, operate and deliver products and services in a way that is not only compatible

with the SDGs, but also contributes to their achievement: the planet's resources must be protected, and people's rights and dignity preserved. The Sustainable Development Goals represent a way forward. They offer a roadmap toward a better future – a future in which no one is left behind. CEMS graduates have both an opportunity and a responsibility to contribute towards that future."

*"CEMS is a window onto the world and the biggest issues we face. Business programs have a duty to build awareness about the impact of business activities and to shine a light on the complex web of social, economic, and environmental challenges; and to create opportunities for graduates – the business leaders of tomorrow – to find and to deliver sustainable solutions for all segments of society."*

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## ★ FEATURE ARTICLE

# POINTING THE WAY TO A GREENER ECONOMY

AUTHOR Stephen Hoare Freelance Journalist

The CEMS community explores the impact of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) on business leadership and the creation of radical new business models



In 2015 a UN global summit launched "Agenda 2030", with a key element being its seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) which, in the words of the UN Charter, "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". The SDGs are essentially an agenda for governments, society and business to create a fairer and more sustainable future for all world citizens. They range from the idealistic goals of "no poverty" and "zero hunger" to calls for "climate action" and "clean water and sanitation" as well as "decent work and economic growth" and "responsible consumption and production". It is not always clear how companies should respond, but solutions can be found that are relevant for many different industry sectors and markets: there is clearly no one size fits all.

For CEMS Academic Member Schools and for CEMS Corporate and Social Partners, SDGs are starting to inform research and shape the business agenda of the future. The influence of the development goals can be seen in areas such as business strategy, entrepreneurship, marketing, and human resources, where issues like sustainability, corporate social responsibility, leadership, innovation, recruitment for diversity and equality have come to the fore.

The CEMS community has been contributing to the debate by exploring the way companies respond to the challenge of implementing the UN SDGs. A group of Six Sigma quality accredited business schools including WU Vienna, ESADE, University of St. Gallen and some others recently came together to develop an online course focused on the SDGs. Called the Sigma Responsible Business Course, each school contributed its teaching and research expertise. Ninety students, many from CEMS schools, worked in small virtual teams across institutions to identify best practice examples of companies which were meeting the UN goals. Christof Mishka assistant professor in international management at Wirtschaftsuniversität (WU) Vienna explains: "My involvement in teaching about the UN

*"The SDGs are essentially an agenda for governments, society and business to create a fairer and more sustainable future for all world citizens. They range from the idealistic goals of "no poverty" and "zero hunger" to calls for "climate action" and "clean water and sanitation" as well as "decent work and economic growth" and "responsible consumption and production"*

SDGs sprang from the course I developed in responsible leadership."

One finding of particular relevance to teaching of UN SDGs came from exposing students to cross-cultural experiences. Says Mishka, "it was interesting that corporate best practice can be interpreted so differently depending on where people are from and their cultural background." He believes that companies need to recognise cross-cultural influences and work to develop a common language and methodology to deliver on global targets.

One difficulty that is already apparent is deciding which of the UN's seventeen development goals should apply to business and in what circumstances. While individual companies might struggle with large overarching targets, they need to find which targets are most relevant to their business. Professor Eleanor O'Higgins from University College Dublin comments: "I'm concerned that one target (climate action) is not enough and seventeen are too many especially as some goals overlap with each other." O'Higgins and professor Laszlo Zolnai of Corvinus University, co-authors of *Progressive Business Models*:

Creating Sustainable and Pro-social Enterprise believe that capitalist economies need to embrace radical change. Says O'Higgins, "the traditional business model has to be re-thought and re-structured."

The book illustrates its theme with a series of case studies of companies that have adopted progressive business models. Examples include the Finnish wind energy co-operative Lumituuli which derives its inspiration from SDG 7 – "affordable clean energy" and the Spanish subsidiary of the German insurance company Integralia whose happy and productive workforce meets SDGs 8 and 10 – "decent work and economic growth" and "reducing inequality" and is the result of a recruitment strategy that offers opportunity to disabled people. "What these companies have in common is they are progressive enterprises that seek to serve society, nature and future generations," says O'Higgins.

Across CEMS Academic Member schools, students have been engaged in a variety of projects to study how companies and individuals are responding to the SDGs. At Nova School of Business and Economics in Lisbon students were asked to study why food and beverage producers were reluctant to draw attention to their corporate social responsibility initiatives when it came to marketing their products. Interviews were conducted with consumers and brand managers of leading companies. What emerged was a "chicken and egg situation" in which the companies felt their efforts to improve CSR would not be translated into public approval and brand awareness.

Pedro Moreira de Lemos took part in the project last year discovered a degree of cynicism among consumers who often regarded corporate claims to boost their environmental credentials as "greenwash". However efforts to address the SDGs were often genuine and effective. He comments: "One food company was cutting down waste by recovering food that could not be sold because it was out of code. Bananas that could not be presented as supermarket fresh were being recycled as ingredients for sweets or chutney where freshness and appearance were not an issue." While the company concerned believed that its initiative which met the objectives of UN SDG 12 might be seen as profit-driven, NOVA students believed its approach to "responsible consumption" would be seen as a positive if companies tailored a more relatable, informative and transparent communication strategy to consumers in order to reduce their skepticism.



PHOTO ABOVE:  
Carina Grosse-Entrup

*"A study was carried out at the University of St. Gallen, where students took part in a three day 'boot camp' to brainstorm green marketing solutions that companies could use to promote their progress in meeting UN SDG 12. Our aim was to apply design thinking to raise awareness and encourage consumers to engage with the need for responsible consumption and production," says Rotterdam School of Management student Carina Grosse-Entrup.*



A similar study was carried out at the University of St. Gallen, where students took part in a three day "boot camp" to brainstorm green marketing solutions that companies could use to promote their progress in meeting UN SDG 12. "Our aim was to apply design thinking to raise awareness and encourage consumers to engage with the need for responsible consumption and production," says Rotterdam School of Management student Carina Grosse-Entrup. On secondment to St Gallen where she was responsible for marketing the CEMS programme, Grosse-Entrup organised student visits to Geneva-based CEMS partners including the United Nations and P&G.

Part of the "boot camp" involved teams of students conducting a market research exercise in which members of the public were quizzed about sustainability issues. The surprise finding was that half of the respondents had never heard of the UN sustainable development goals at all! Supermarket shoppers tended to look for the cheapest price rather than seeking out organic produce, fresh bread and local products like cheese, seasonal fruit and vegetables.

Changing people's buying habits could contribute to meeting SDGs by supporting local farmers, thereby cutting down on the wasteful air freight involved in importing exotic foods and the cash crops which are distorting third world economies. Buying closer to home at little extra cost would help reduce reliance on air transport.

Based on prototyping, students designed a mobile phone app which would inform consumers of sustainable choices and alternatives. Some valuable insights guided this design. Says Grosse-Entrup, "Before you can encourage sustainable buying, you have to make people aware of the choices they have. And you have to make choosing natural products very easy for people. They have to be available at the local supermarket."

Globally, one of the main barriers to eliminating poverty and hunger, promoting good health and wellbeing and upholding a universal right to clean water and sanitation is the result of corrupt business practices. For too long major economies have been exploiting the developing world and it is a major part of the UN's agenda to create a more level playing field.

CEMS Social Partner, Transparency International, campaigns for corporates to make full disclosure of the profits, tax paid and the

*"Investors are starting to take transparent reporting on sustainability seriously. WU Vienna CEMS alumna Nadia Brandauer says: "If a company is managed sustainably it will do better in future in terms of financial returns. According to my company's Investor Watch, 58 per cent of our high net wealth customers believe that sustainable investment will become the standard within the next ten years."*

measures undertaken in each country they trade with. The University of Louvain School of Management and Transparency International Belgium have a long term partnership in which CEMS students learn how businesses are applying UN SDG 16 ("peace, justice and strong institutions) to their public reporting to shareholders and investors. Carlos Desmet, visiting professor in business ethics and responsible leadership, says, "corruption is the single biggest obstacle to meeting the sustainable development goals. It has a huge negative impact on the world economy."

The practice of offering money or gifts means overseas contracts are not necessarily awarded to the best performing companies and work and materials may be sub-standard. All too often, infrastructure projects in developing countries like hospitals, schools, bridges and railways are substandard." The issue is so important that the World Bank keeps a blacklist of companies found guilty of corrupt practice on its website.

This academic year, six Louvain CEMS students applied Transparency International's TRAC methodology to study fifteen of Belgium's top twenty companies as part of the school of management's business project. Students analysed how each firm's anti-corruption policy was working in practice, how transparent the reporting was in the main company and across



subsidiaries and finally how companies were communicating financial results country by country.

At the end of three months, the project team requested that senior managers from each company be available at the end of the study to receive the report and discuss its findings. Twelve out of fifteen companies agreed, listening to feedback and promising to act on the findings.

Strict confidentiality was observed and the purpose of the exercise was to provide information to Transparency International in its advocacy role. Guido De Clerq of Transparency International Belgium commented: "Student fieldwork has given us some important insights. As a result, we recommend appropriate compliance policies, tougher monitoring and controls, implementing rules equally across all geographical areas and that clients, suppliers

and partners undertake due diligence based on a risk profile."

Investors are starting to take transparent reporting on sustainability seriously. Meeting the UN SDGs is an essential element of one Swiss investment banks asset management business. WU Vienna CEMS alumna Nadia Brandauer works for this bank in Zurich as a request for proposal writer, a role which involves managing investment portfolios for insurance companies and pensions. Brandauer explains that clients see sustainability as more important than profitability, which can be short-lived. She says: "If a company is managed sustainably it will do better in future in terms of financial returns. According to my company's Investor Watch, 58 per cent of our high net wealth customers believe that sustainable investment will become the standard within the next ten years."



# ATKearney

## CASE STUDY AT KEARNEY RECYCLING AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Consumers are looking for brands which are sustainable, and millennials are especially conscious of this, "says Tei Peng global director of social impact at AT Kearney a management consultancy with branches in more than 40 countries worldwide.

A trusted corporate partner of CEMS, AT Kearney advises its clients across different industries and business sectors including governments, educational institutions and not-for-profits to understand and cope with complex social impact and sustainability challenges. As Tei Peng asserts this includes playing an active role in ensuring the UN SDGs are met. It is a long term on-going journey. "We have a policy as a firm that outlines how we make a positive impact on the communities in which we operate."

Tei Peng sees the circular economy as one of the most promising business models which can help societies achieve the UN sustainable development goals by 2035. Using recyclable components which can be easily replaced or renewed to prolong the life of a product, manufactures design products to be leased rather than purchased outright. Says Tei Peng: "The consumer is buying a service rather than an object. I see recycling and a commitment to reduce waste as the key benefits of the circular economy.



Sustainability teams working within the company's asset management division have put together funds related to specific UN SDGs such as climate change, food production, water and renewable energy. Sustainable investment is now being implemented in all asset classes. Investments are rated according to environmental, social and governmental principles ESG. According to Brandauer, 25 per cent of global assets are managed sustainably (according to ESG principles), but this is set to rise to 50 per cent over the next five years.

The United Nations estimates that \$ US 5-7 trillion of annual investment is needed globally in order to achieve its sustainable development goals. Radical change, progressive business models and a sustained focus is needed to help build a future where food, education, clean water and sanitation, healthcare, renewable energy and environmental stewardship are raised to a universal standard.



# CLIMATE CHANGE: *THE RELUCTANT SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR* BRINGING AI TO THE FORESTS OF BORNEO

What do you get when you mix mobile phones, photographs and artificial intelligence (AI) with a rain forest in Borneo? Ask CEMS alumnus, Jonas Bohm, and he'll tell you: the answer is TREEO

**T**REEO is a stunningly innovative project currently being rolled out in Borneo's Gunung Mas District by Fairventures Worldwide from Stuttgart and supported by Bridge17.org, the start-up co-founded by Jonas and Nicola Terrenghi in 2017.

Leveraging machine learning to collect and disseminate data from forests, TREEO is connecting smallholder farmers with nurseries, micro-financers, end-customers, local communities and government, creating positive feedback loops and driving efforts to arrest deforestation in one of the most critically affected areas on the planet. And it's garnering plaudits from all sides along the way. Last year, the project picked up the Google Impact Challenge prize, pocketing half a million euros that will help it scale.

The CEMS Magazine sat down with Jonas Bohm to find out more about AI, trees and Borneo – and what makes him such a reluctant social entrepreneur.

**Jonas, congratulations on winning the Google Impact Challenge for TREEO. Could you tell us more about the project and how it works?**

TREEO is basically all about bridging the data gap between forestry farmers, investors

and end-customers. One of the biggest roadblocks for all three groups is the lack of reliable and accurate information about trees – the different species, health, growth, size and age of trees, and who their legal owners are. Track-and-trace mechanisms that rely on field visits or surveys are hugely susceptible to inaccuracy (or even fraud) which can put investors off and stymie sales. Typically the kind of data generated this way is less than 50% accurate.

We reasoned that even in the most remote places on the planet, people have access to smart phones with high-quality, in-built cameras. In other words, they can record the growth and progress of their plants over time using the phone in their pocket. On that basis, we designed a very simple AI model that can be installed on smart phones anywhere in the world, to read data and information from the images taken. This data can then be used by farmers to improve methods. It can also be shared on the marketplace to drive business, and with investors to accelerate sustainable farming and reforestation.

In a sense, we are combining the most ancient technology in the world with the very latest advances – photosynthesis combined with AI – to change the system and bring data accuracy up to nearly 90%.





**And you've piloted the project in one of the most remote places on the planet?**

Yes. We piloted in Gunung Mas, in the central Kalimantan province of Borneo, in April 2018. The AI app has been installed in the smartphones of smallholder foresters in the region, and the idea is that they go out once a year and take photos of each of their trees. We then take the data and add it to our data base.

It's way less error-prone than existing measures being used in places like Borneo, because we have the time stamps, we have metadata that can be verified, we have the pictures themselves and the GPS points. We can also correlate all of this with drone and satellite images.

We feed the data back to the farmers and share it with banks and micro-investors looking to make loans to foresters in Borneo, who need hard, quality data on which to base their decisions. Then we share it with customers such as processing plants and furniture companies around the world who need to regulate their timber supply. So the whole value chain is enriched.

Right now we're working with local farmer organisations that are helping us bring the project onto the market and we're pretty confident that we are going to be scaling fast in the coming year.

**Jonas, you are a CEMS graduate from Aalto and you hold a PhD from St. Gallen. You could have chosen any number of professional paths. What was it that inspired you to work in social enterprise and in climate change in particular?**

I honestly think it's just a sense that we have so much knowledge at our fingertips, and the potential to use this knowledge to create something genuinely useful that can have impact on the world.

With Bridge17, our raison d'être is to address

© PHOTO CREDIT: FW Christof Krackhardt





*"Anyone trying to build a long-lasting enterprise should have a sense of sustainability in mind. After all, what you want is to have a sustainable business. I think that it's incumbent on entrepreneurs from any walk of life and in any sector to re-think the notion of sustainability and broaden their definition of it"*

the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals using digital knowledge and technology to bridge information gaps. Starting up, we got ourselves out there into the field and brainstormed with different groups around the different kinds of business models that could generate profit, but at the same time deliver impact.

The key driver with the TREEO initiative was winning the Google Impact Challenge last year, which gave us the resources and the financing to kick off the pilot.

**Starting up in any field is usually a pretty steep learning curve. What kinds of takeaways can you share from the last 12 months?**

I think one of the major pieces that has driven us forward has been the sheer gratitude and the thanks that the major beneficiaries – the farmers themselves – have given us. In some cases, people have been moved to tears by the fact that someone else cares about them, their forests and their livelihood. This has been as humbling as it is rewarding.

Then from a business perspective, I'd say one of the key things has been discovering how hard it is to break the logic of a space that you are trying to disrupt in some way.

The business and the sustainability sectors work in their own ways. I went into TREEO thinking that the ideas that we were trying to introduce would be universally welcomed. But in practice it's been much harder than I'd anticipated. People understand your value proposition, but you're still grappling with a resistance to change that can make implementation and execution very sluggish.

Finally, I think it's also just about being exposed to hard work – and new experiences. Launching the pilot in Borneo, at times I found myself sleeping on a floor and showering in a river. But that's just what you have to do. And it's part of the adventure.

**It sounds like you are very committed to your work! You obviously hold to the belief that social entrepreneurship is not only worthwhile, but holds many answers to some of the biggest challenges we face. Is that a fair assessment?**

It is. I think we need to be clear that having impact shouldn't just be left to non-profits and NGOs who often lack scale and speed that businesses and technologies can deliver.

Personally I am not a big fan of the term "social entrepreneurship" because it makes a distinction that I don't think needs to be there.

Anyone trying to build a long-lasting enterprise should have a sense of sustainability in mind. After all, what you want is to have a sustainable business. I think that it's incumbent on entrepreneurs from any walk of life and in any sector to re-think the notion of sustainability and broaden their definition of it.

I wouldn't call myself a "social entrepreneur" as I reject the kind of *do-gooder* associations that I think devalue or dilute the powerful business logic of what we are trying to do.

My co-founder, our team and I are simply entrepreneurs who have a broader understanding of sustainability. And who welcome the possibility of doing good in the world that we all live in.

# INCLUSIVENESS: GETTING OUT THERE AND DOING IT

Opportunity-building with under-represented communities can take many forms and yield a breadth of unexpected gains and impact. But there is one key imperative that holds true however you go about it, say these CEMSies. And that's getting out there and doing it

**T**here are many ways to build bridges and deliver much needed resources, know-how, skills and opportunities to underserved or marginalised communities. It's even possible to do so while driving profitability with purpose for yourself and your organisation.

You could, for instance, lead initiatives on behalf of major league players and spearhead change from within a corporation.

Alternatively, you could set up your own venture or project and cascade the benefits and opportunities to the community.

Or you could work to build awareness and engagement through education and training initiatives that create positive feedback loops across multiple stakeholder groups.

You could even give up your time and your expertise pro bono and still reap concrete and quantifiable rewards.

But however you choose to put your abilities to work in the pursuit of greater inclusiveness, says Clara Villain, one thing

holds true. And that's rolling up your sleeves, and "getting out there."

"Whatever it is that you want to do to effect change, there comes a point where you just have to take off the suit, put on your boots and head out into the field."

And she should know. Quite literally.

A CEMS graduate of The London School of Economics, Clara has worked with a major energy company, since 2017. Specifically, she is a business developer within PowerCorner, an "internal start-up" that builds and rolls out off-grid electricity mini-grids for rural communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

One of the functions of PowerCorner is to service its mother company's decarbonisation objectives. Another has a deep connection with Clara's personal sense of purpose.

"With PowerCorner we're supplying energy in a way that is not only cleaner, greener and more sustainable, it also supports income-generating activities on the ground. We're



IMAGE COURTESY OF POWERCORNER



working with local people and hiring local teams in order to scale our business, while improving living conditions for the local populace. It's a hugely dynamic and exciting space to be working in," she says.

Clara's job has taken her into diverse rural communities across Africa – "suit off, boots on" field work that is yielding transformative results and delivering sustainable energy to scores of villages in countries like Zambia and Nigeria.

"One of the most gratifying parts of the job is seeing how impact ripples outward. When a health centre switches from kerosene to mini-grid energy you get improved performance from things like fridges which are storing medicines. That pays off in terms of patient follow up – more people receive better healthcare. Similarly, bringing energy to a school means you have more reliable computers and better access to the internet. In one school, electric lighting meant they could offer night classes to adults. So you have more inclusivity, and at no additional cost to the community as they are simply switching from one energy source to another – better – one."

Private sector companies like hers can play a key role in bringing experience from developed countries to bear on the kinds of energy, education, finance or resource challenges that face their emerging counterparts. And they can help accelerate solutions, says Clara. But she is quick to debunk any idea that the "players from the privileged west" hold all the cards.

"When you work in places where people do struggle and where life can be very hard, there is no space for any 'saviour complex', and it's surprising how you lose any charity-type mindset very quickly. Empowering communities is just as much about empowering yourself in reality," she says. "Yes, you get personal rewards of seeing impact but the challenges are incredibly exciting professionally and intellectually. Emerging markets are where you often really see innovation in action. And working with people from lots of different backgrounds is a phenomenal opportunity to learn."

Menno de Block agrees.



### Diving deep and going far

A CEMS graduate of Rotterdam School of Management, Menno moved to Cambodia in 2014 to pursue a long-held ambition to work in social enterprise. However his life took a very unexpected turn as a result of meeting and gaining inspiration from the exceptional young women he was meeting in his line of work.

"I was really struck by young female leaders that we met and worked with – by what they were telling me about how they had overcome huge odds to accede to leadership and influence in their communities. I began to chronicle their stories in the form of blog posts, and I was surprised by how much these posts resonated with readers around the world."

Mobilised by the response to his blog, Menno set about writing a book about next-generation

female leaders in Cambodia. The result is *Diving Deep, Going Far* – a fictionalised account of how resourceful and enterprising young women have found a pathway to success and fulfilment in spite of poverty, patriarchy and a lack of role models.

"The book is based on a series of more than 25 interviews with real women. I worked with my co-author, Kunthea Chan, to condense these stories into four main characters and touch on universal themes including gender equality, personal leadership and following one's dreams."

Published in June 2018, *Diving Deep, Going Far* has sold more than 2,000 copies in Cambodia to date and has made its way into the teaching curriculum in a number of rural communities. Funding has been raised, says Menno, to translate the book into Khmer and



IMAGE COURTESY OF POWERCORNER

*"Empowering communities is just as much about empowering yourself in reality," Clara says. "Yes, you get personal rewards of seeing impact but the challenges are incredibly exciting professionally and intellectually. Emerging markets are where you often really see innovation in action. And working with people from lots of different backgrounds is a phenomenal opportunity to learn."*



distribute 5,000 copies to schools, libraries and Cambodian NGOs.

"The goal is to give as many young people, especially young women, exposure to the ideas, frameworks and practical lessons in the book and help inspire and empower them to take their own step towards leadership. So in a sense, it's about giving these young women who have not had role models an opportunity to become role models themselves."

International reception has also been positive, and the book is playing a role in showcasing the kind of roadblocks women who aspire to leadership face in rural communities in South East Asia. And the enterprising solutions they deploy in overcoming them.

"We're working now on promoting the book outside of Cambodia," says Menno. "I believe the relevance is there for women – and for men too – no matter where they live. There's a universality to the ideas here that transcends geography."

Going from business graduate to published author of fiction is an unconventional trajectory for a CEMS alum, as Menno himself acknowledges. But he credits the critical thinking faculties developed as a business practitioner and strategist with the ability to unearth and articulate the important narratives that inform the book – and the

messages within it that have the potential to bridge divides.

"I believe my own story in writing the book showcases an unusual, non-corporate side to our community, but very much one that exemplifies CEMS and our commitment to using our talents and resources in being stewards of a better tomorrow."

#### **Inclusiveness: From theory ...**

The CEMS spirit of inclusiveness is also exemplified by the work of Professor Ranjit Voola with CEMS students at the University of Sydney Business School.

Ranjit has developed a new unit of study called Poverty Alleviation and Profitability. And the class is causing ripples – not only across the CEMS student community in Australia, but across the international academic community also.

"The class is a first in the sense that it looks at poverty alleviation not only from the business perspective – what's in it for business – but digs deep into the root causes of poverty and inequality. As this is such a new area of teaching, the course draws deeply on cutting-edge research and emerging case studies from the business world."

Ranjit believes that businesses have a "moral and economic imperative" to engage



*"Ranjit believes that businesses have a "moral and economic imperative" to engage with social issues such as poverty. And he says that they can do this while making profits. "There are 4 billion people on the planet living on less than \$5 a day. As developed countries become saturated markets, companies here are looking at these other markets. The challenge to them is to rethink their business models and make the switch from low volume-high margins, to high volume-low margins. In other words, they need to be thinking about how to make a little money from many people"*



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And this is a concept that is resonating with Ranjit's students.

"In class, students engage in a deep discussion and systematic analysis of the ideas and the evidence we have gathered about companies like KPMG, PWC and Opportunity International and Konicka Minolta, Australia, who are shaping the narrative in this area. The *flipped classroom* dynamic, which shifts the focus from exploring content in class to post-hoc analysis and debate, has seen students act as co-creators rather than recipients of knowledge."

The proactive questioning of assumptions and beliefs is playing out in a substantive change of attitudes – and even career choices, says Ranjit.

"On completing the course, many of our students have chosen professional paths that are seeing them get out into the world and play their own proactive role in tackling inequality."

Meanwhile, in Brazil, novel approaches to learning and knowledge acquisition are also informing the debate around inclusion.

#### **To experience...**

The Vale Do Ribeira in the state of Sao Paulo is home to the *quilombola*, a community descended from Afro-Brazilian slaves. Lacking basic infrastructure and resources, these people also live under constant threat from government plans to build dams.

In the summer of 2018, 26 international FGV Brazil CEMS students studying at the School of Business Administration of Sao Paulo (Escola de Administração de Empresas

de São Paulo) spent five days in the region, interacting with local leadership and exploring how the community engaged in sustainable farming.

According to CEMS programme manager, Eliene Soares da Silva, the experience gave the students a chance to get out into the field, and gain hands-on, practical experience of how to "combine the perks of development with preservation of our beautiful natural world."

"The Vale Do Ribeira situation exemplifies the UN Sustainability Development Goal of planning that brings development to a region without killing the local culture. We wanted the students to see – not just read about – the impact of the decisions made by powerful institutions such as the government and the private sector on the environment and on the local culture of remote communities like the quilombolas."

As a learning experience, the field trip has had enormous impact on the CEMS students involved. One of them shared the feedback that: "We need to break the paradigm that city and nature should be separated, that sustainability is the enemy of the private sector and of development. Never in my life I would have thought to have an experience like this, I would never learn so much in an office or in the classroom."

**...to action: The NGC story**

Taking the learning experience out of the classroom is a concept that is also very close to Seva Granin's heart.

A CEMS graduate of HEC and UCD Smurfit, Seva is the president of New Generation Consulting, a founded pro bono consulting group that offers CEMS students the opportunity to work with social enterprises all over the world – and enrich their real-world understanding, consultancy competences and international network in the process.

"NGC is a collective of volunteers from the CEMS ecosystem working in virtual, international teams. From the board to project managers to individual consultants we leverage the collected talent of the CEMS ecosystem and match that talent to the needs





*“Each semester, NGC runs around eight different projects with NGOs and social businesses that require student involvement. To date, the programme has consulted on more than 55 successful projects around the world, ranging from reforestation and erosion initiatives to entrepreneurship training for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Volunteers typically report a tangible impact on their learning and career prospects – as well a desire to come back and get involved in new projects”*



of a broad diversity of social businesses that are often working in challenging geographies and markets that are hard to access.”

Volunteering is strictly limited to CEMS students and alumni, says Seva, both as a means of ensuring the quality of the consulting, and ensuring that opportunities reach students within the community.

“For CEMSies, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore new markets, industries and organisations working in sustainability. And because we work virtually, using technologies like Skype, we are able to bring people together from all over the world without incurring additional costs in terms of time or travel.”

The diversity of opportunity is “stunning” says Seva.

We have a lot of projects on offer to them that can range from all kinds of things from companies working on remittance in remote areas, to start-ups leveraging technologies like AI, augmented reality or blockchain.”

And the concept is a “win-win-win.”

“Students get essential pre-career experience under their belt and a chance to hone critical skills in diverse areas. The project stakeholders receive world-class support in overcoming the road blocks to scale up their activities. And together, we help accelerate and amplify the impact that these social enterprises are having in the world.”

Each semester, NGC runs around eight different projects with NGOs and social businesses that require student involvement. To date, the programme has consulted on more than 55 successful projects around the world, ranging from reforestation and erosion initiatives to entrepreneurship training for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Volunteers typically report a tangible impact on their learning and career prospects – as well a desire to come back and get involved in new projects.

The real challenge NGC faces, says Seva, is in getting the word out to new generations of CEMS students.

“Quite often I am asked by alumni if NGC still exists,” he laughs. “CEMS is a short programme with a high turnover and there’s only a one-to-two semester window where students can participate. So each year we have to market and re-market the opportunity.”

Despite this, NGC is as robust as ever and growing in terms of participants and impact. And Seva’s message to the CEMS community is “really quite simple.”

“We’re here, we’re stronger than ever and we have ambitious plans to deliver more impact. So if you’re interested in building your experience, finding out more about the world and playing your part in effecting change where it is most needed, find out more about us. Get out there and do it.”

# REFUGEES: THE INTEGRATION GAME

Immigrant populations have been growing in virtually all OECD countries over the last decade.

**L**atest figures put the annual influx of permanent immigrants at just over five million people. Of these, some are economic migrants looking for opportunities to improve their living standards. Another category are refugees: people proven to be in dire need of international protection.

For many of these people, the prospect of returning home any time soon are slim. Forcibly displaced by wars, violent conflict or persecution, they are often obliged to view their host country as a permanent place of residence – a new home to put down roots, raise families and earn a living.

But the challenges facing them are manifold, says Thomas Liebig from the International Migration Division of the OECD.

"For a high proportion of refugees, integration is a challenge. In contrast to labour migrants, these people don't arrive by choice. They haven't planned to relocate in pursuit of existing jobs and often do not have easily transferable skills or sufficient fluency in host languages to find jobs. In this sense, the odds that favour their professional integration are much weaker."

And then there are the societal challenges.

A high concentration of disadvantaged people (often in areas that are already home to disadvantaged populations) difficulties in adapting to new social contexts, a chronic failure to return failed asylum seekers to their country of origin and disproportionate press coverage of negative outcomes – all these can tip public opinion against refugee populations, making social integration all the more complicated.

*"Refugees and immigrants in general are often scapegoats for social and economic shifts. They tend to get the blame when things change, even if this change is unrelated to their presence, simply because of media, fake news and the rise of populism, it has become so much easier to perpetuate biases"*

"Refugees and immigrants in general are often scapegoats for social and economic shifts. They tend to get the blame when things change, even if this change is unrelated to their presence, simply because of media, fake news and the rise of populism, it has become so much easier to perpetuate biases."

But as conflicts continue to displace people and with migration approaching record highs, the imperative to do more to help newcomers integrate is only set to become more acute. And failure to do so, warns Liebig, will only lead to a "vicious cycle" of marginalisation – with all of the economic and social costs that that entails.







"For migration to play a positive role both for migrants and host societies, it is imperative that integration succeeds. Successful integration of migrants and their children who are already in the host country is a precondition for the acceptance of further migration by the host-country society. We have seen too much focus on a control in migration management historically – and far too little on integration."

#### **Refugees forward: integrating entrepreneurship**

One enterprising CEMS alumnus who is very much alive to the need to accelerate integration and the benefits of doing so is CEMS graduate, Diederick van der Wijk.

In 2018, Diederick, CEMS classmate, Laura di Santolo and Rotterdam School of Management alumnus David Hwan, founded Refugees Forward, a business incubator that brings together immigrant entrepreneurs with new business concepts, professional coaches, CEMS student training teams and a growing network of public and private investors.

The idea, says Diederick, is to empower enterprising newcomers to launch, fund and grow their own businesses and thereby achieve self-reliance, better integration – and a chance to make a valuable contribution in their new home country.

"It all stems from our joint desire to pursue something with purpose and social impact, and to address one of the most acute challenges in Dutch society. David, Laura and I are all passionate about entrepreneurship and we saw the potential to achieve our objectives simultaneously."

Refugees Forward puts newcomer entrepreneurs through an intensive training programme that gives them one-to-one coaching with industry experts, as well as access to an extensive support network of corporate partners who give additional input on areas like strategy, finance, legal and marketing. These partners include Mazars, Deloitte, Linklaters and Uber.

Diederick has further leveraged his CEMS connections to bring current students into the fold.

*"If you open the door to entrepreneurship and allow people to demonstrate their talent, their resourcefulness and their creativity, you achieve a number of things: you shift the narrative away from charity – the simplistic notion of helping those in need that can dehumanise people – and you position them more accurately as business people, achievers, risk-takers and innovators."*



"We invite CEMSies to work together in teams with our participants, which is a real win-win for everyone. Participants benefit from regular and steady exposure to support, input and access to the kinds of cutting-edge ideas and thinking that students bring. Meanwhile, the students build up a huge amount of real-world experience, honing their own consultancy skills and gaining deeper understanding of multi-cultural business issues – all while challenging their own preconceptions."

And the win-win translates into hard metrics too.

Since 2018, Refugees Forward has launched no fewer than 12 viable businesses, raised more than €300,500 in investment and saved the Dutch government some €73,500 in social security payments. And those figures are set to more than quadruple by the end of 2019.

"We have ambitious growth objectives," says Diederick. "By 2020 we aim to be putting more than 200 entrepreneurs from refugee backgrounds through their paces, changing their lives and those of the people they go on to employ."

Entrepreneurship, he says, is a great leveller.

"If you open the door to entrepreneurship and allow people to demonstrate their talent, their resourcefulness and their creativity, you achieve a number of things: you shift the narrative away from charity – the simplistic notion of helping those in need that can dehumanise people – and you position them more accurately as business people, achievers,

risk-takers and innovators. These are people who are empowered to drive economic growth in their new social contexts, create jobs and – crucially – become role models for others within their communities. They set example and provide hope."

### Challenging perspectives

Another CEMS graduate looking to shift the narrative on the integration of refugees is Nina Poxleitner, founder of More Than One Perspective (MTOP), a social enterprise that operates on two critical fronts.

Since 2016, MTOP has been providing soft skills training, professional coaching and job placement services to highly skilled newcomers from IT and engineering backgrounds. Last November, Nina and her team launched a new initiative providing leadership development training to partner organisations – with a twist.

"We founded MTOP with the view to meeting companies' demand for highly skilled workers while playing a role in facilitating the integration of immigrant workers into Austrian society," says Nina, a graduate of the University of Vienna. "The idea was to help bridge the skills gap by assisting talented people to navigate the complexities of Austrian hiring processes and legal systems, while working with organisations to define their needs and identify people with the right profiles and qualifications to step into jobs."

And the impact has been significant.

With public funding from the Austrian government and the European Union, and income from the fees paid by hiring companies, MTOP has successfully rolled out its six-month training programme over the last three years, transforming the prospects and the lives of more than 160 participants to date. Of these, some 70 percent have been successfully placed in high-status jobs with partner corporations that include Deloitte.

But that's not all.

Spotting an opportunity to further leverage their extensive participant talent pool, Nina and her team piloted a new initiative in late 2018. The idea was to deliver leadership development training to MTOP partners that would simultaneously deliver real-world,

hands-on practice, build much-needed multi-cultural sensibilities and challenge entrenched stereo-types and biased thinking.

"We realised that the integration issue goes beyond equipping candidates with the know-how and the soft skills to build killer CVs and ace interviews. It's also about really addressing the kinds of prejudices and biases that block recruiters from seeing people's potential. So we designed a leadership programme for executives in our partners organisations that gives them a chance to mentor a real group of real people from refugee backgrounds – participants in our training programme. They get the opportunity to experience managing real people from different cultures. And to rethink their own perspectives, while challenging those of others within their organisation."

A pilot cycle of leadership training in the last six months has garnered positive feedback from partners, and further programmes are being rolled out between July and September of 2019. MTOP also has longer-term plans to optimise diversity by bringing different companies together in mixed training packages.

It's all part of "closing the circle," says Nina.

"We started by addressing skills shortages and the waste of talent by helping underrepresented people skill up and matching them to jobs. With the leadership development piece, we're offering multicultural training that challenges the biased thinking that blocks diversity. So while what we do is about helping talented people restart their lives in a new environment, it's also about empowering businesses and people from privileged backgrounds reframe the way we think about those who are less privileged."

#### **Reframing relationships: The MORE Buddy System**

Carolin Oeschlager is a CEMS student at the University of Vienna (WU). For the last 12 months, she has been leading the MORE Buddy initiative – a project that she launched

that matches student volunteers and prospective undergraduates from refugee backgrounds through social, cultural and sporting activities.

The experience, she says, has been as transformative in terms of her thinking, as it has been personally enriching.

"MORE began at University of Vienna to help prepare incoming students to study at the university. I founded the buddy club to bring people together in a social and cultural mentoring dynamic as a way of building understanding, helping newcomers to further develop their German language skills, and basically challenging regular students to lose their fear of foreigners," Carolin laughs.

WU students are also charged with helping their "buddies" with practical challenges such as applying for internships and other administrative issues.

By her own admission, Carolin was initially sceptical about getting involved.

"I really didn't know what to expect going into it. I think there was a generalised suspicion towards the programme, largely fuelled by images in the media and negative experiences with refugee populations. But gradually the programme began to gain traction. Buddying breaks down barriers. It fosters a human contact that opens you up to new people and new experiences on a very personal level."

She cites a cultural excursion to the Mauthausen Concentration Camps during which she was surprised by how much more her MORE buddies knew about Austrian history than she did – an experience that underscored the mutual learning potential that the initiative offered.

"It's not about you giving your time in a one-sided way. And for the students from refugee backgrounds, it's not just about taking. It's about both sides bringing something and contributing."

MORE is also an example of getting around the kinds of bureaucratic roadblocks that inhibit incoming populations from integrating quickly and effectively.



*"Most OECD countries are facing skills shortages. Meanwhile our survey data shows us that incoming migrants and refugees are willing to learn, willing to upskill themselves and willing to work. These are people who want to contribute positively to society. They are people who want economic independence, who want to clear their debts, and who want to support their families."*



"In Austria there are so formal procedures that stand between people and the opportunity to work or study or even just learn German. When you look at it objectively, it's as though our society is not providing enough opportunities for people to integrate and have an impact – which, in my experience, is exactly what most people want to do. Things like MORE are easily replicable projects that help us get past regulations and fast track knowledge-sharing and assimilation on a personal level but in a way that benefits everyone and that can be scaled."

#### Taking the initiative

Thomas Liebig agrees that education and the private sector can both play a critical role in overcoming the regulatory issues that hinder integration.

He particularly welcomes mentoring initiatives like MORE that benefit both mentor and mentee, and that can be put together with minimal infrastructure and reproduced across different organisations and structures with relative ease. And he stresses the imperative to do so.

"Most OECD countries are facing skills shortages. Meanwhile our survey data shows us that incoming migrants and refugees are willing to learn, willing to upskill themselves and willing to work. These are people who want to contribute positively to society. They are people who want economic independence, who want to clear their debts, and who want to support their families."

It is incumbent on us, he says, to do more to transform a potential crisis into a win-win scenario that not only fosters human understanding and learning, but gives everyone an opportunity to "do better."



# SUSTAINABILITY: CLOSING THE CIRCLE

What does it take to tackle the most pressing challenges to sustainability and sustainable development?





*"Founded in 2016, Plan A not only helps to bridge the gap between the science and business communities, it also addresses what Lubomila calls the "problem of generalisation" that drives a one-size-fits-all approach to environmental issues"*

**B**ridging the gap between government, science and business is the only way to create change at a pace and scale that matches the urgency of need in this field.

So says Lubomila Jordanova.

A graduate of the London School of Economics and financial analyst by training, Lubomila has long wrestled with an acute awareness of the need to act on climate change and the destruction of natural habitats – and a feeling of powerlessness to do so.

"After CEMS, I went out into the world of venture capital and finance, but I was missing a sense of fulfilment. I'd felt a personal connection to action on the environment, but as a data analyst with a business background, I had no idea how or where to position myself, let alone find a business, in what I felt to be essentially a scientific context."

Driven, nonetheless, by an "obsession" to find her role – and sense of vocation – in the fight against climate change, Lubomila took a six-month sabbatical to explore the disconnect between the scientific community, NGOs and the private sector, and connect some dots.

#### **A dating site for businesses looking for a cause**

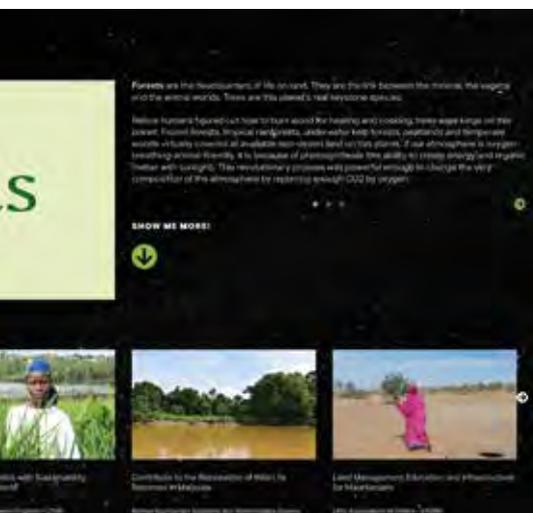
The result is Plan A, a data-driven platform that leverages artificial intelligence to pinpoint the areas on the planet that are most vulnerable to climate change, and then connect environmental players with sources of private funding so they can take focused action in those areas.

Founded in 2016, Plan A not only helps to bridge the gap between the science and business communities, it also addresses what Lubomila calls the "problem of generalisation" that drives a one-size-fits-all approach to environmental issues.

"We're able to use the latest in predictive technology to create 'priority cards' – a list of those areas or issues that are most critical by



*"One of our biggest successes to date has been securing funding to plant two million trees in Kenya. The impact here isn't just environmental. This project helps address long-term environmental and health issues, but it is also creating jobs for local communities. It's delivering impact on multiple fronts: improving living conditions, well-being and income for communities while empowering businesses to contribute to solutions that enhance their long-term outlook. It's closing circles."*



country. Every country and every geography is different, with its own specific problems and challenges, and a need for its own unique raft of solutions."

Customising these solutions means matching specific challenges with businesses or individual that have a particular interest in solving them.

"For publishers the big issue might be deforestation," says Lubomila. "For other businesses, the challenges will be different. We talk to organisations and identify their concerns before matching them with our portfolio of projects around the world. It's almost a dating site for businesses looking for a cause to match with," she laughs.

It's also unique approach that is yielding significant success stories.

"Over the last three years we've matched 65 projects with businesses and we've raised €500,000 in commitments from businesses around the world. One of our biggest successes to date has been securing funding to plant two million trees in Kenya. The impact here isn't just environmental. This project helps address long-term environmental and health issues, but it is also creating jobs for local communities. It's delivering impact on multiple fronts: improving living conditions, well-being and income for communities while empowering businesses to contribute to solutions that enhance their long-term outlook. It's closing circles."

#### Oxygen at work

Another CEMS graduate closing circles in sustainability is Manuel Winter of the University of St.Gallen.

Manuel is the co-founder and CEO of Oxygen at Work, a Swiss start-up that provides workplace and office solutions – with a difference.

"The majority of people spend a disproportionate amount of time in offices," explains Manuel. "The issue is that in these environments we are breathing sterilised or reconditioned air which increases our susceptibility to colds and respiratory infections, stress and poor sleep. The air we breathe in our offices is actively damaging health and affecting productivity."

Manuel's solution? The "oldest technology there is," he says: plants.

"Together with my co-founders – a biologist and a gardener – we came up with a pretty simple idea. Oxygen at Work supplies specially selected plant species that can thrive in indoor spaces. These plants reduce pollutants in the air while increasing humidity."

And the result is not only healthier, more productive employees. Installing the right kinds of plants also helps reduce pollutants and increase humidity which in turn allows clients to lower their heating and ventilation systems. Thanks to the IoT sensors and data exchange, the whole ecosystem can be optimised. On average, the energy consumption (and CO2 emissions) of heating and ventilation systems can be reduced by 30%, says Manuel.

"It's a win-win situation for our clients – a cost-effective means of driving productivity that integrates many of the benefits of smart buildings, including the machine-learning technology to measure impact on air quality and energy-related data."

Oxygen at Work is offered to clients via a system of monthly rental plans that can be adapted to individual needs. This model leverages a network of local partners who manage delivery and maintenance, says Manuel, meaning that the business can be scaled with ease. And growth to date has been remarkable.

"Businesses have really latched on to the idea and our client base includes some of the biggest corporate players in the country, from Syngenta to Credit Suisse. We're growing seven-fold year over year, and we're looking forward to welcoming more clients – including CEMS corporate partners – to the fold this year," he laughs.

Another significant metric stems from the company's pledge to plant two trees in endangered rainforests for every plant rented by customers. A pledge that has led to thousands of new trees being planted in India in 2018.

The key to this kind of impact, says Manuel, is having a business model that is simultaneously sustainable and profitable.

"You can set up a social business with the best intentions in the world, but unless you are able to make a profit to drive your growth over the long term, you end up with sustainability

issues of your own. You have to make money to bring change and improve things or the money flow and the impact will stop."

And that is an understanding that resonates with CEMS student Kamila Rác.

**Eating our way to sustainability**

Kamila and fellow students at Hungary's Corvinus Business School have developed a business plan that addresses education and sustainability in an altogether novel manner.

Working with Budapest's Wesley Janos School and Kindergarten, an organisation that provides education to children from under-privileged backgrounds, the CEMS students have leveraged partnerships with a leading consultancy firm and the Ashoka Foundation to launch... a restaurant. But not just any kind of restaurant.

"It's a different kind of approach," Kamila acknowledges. "The idea is to leverage and invest in the school's kitchen and canteen resources to prepare vegan dishes. These dishes won't only be served to the children to offer them a new type of healthy food, we'll also create a vegan delivery service targeting individuals and local businesses to make money – income that will then be used to finance the school's costs and future expansion plans."

Like many socially-oriented institutions, the school self-finances its core costs and educational projects. Income instability, says Kamila, has threatened its existence in the past and continues to stymie further growth – creating insecurity for children and their families in the local community.

The restaurant project is an ingenious means of leveraging existing resources while minimising additional costs, to generate much needed income stability – all while "fighting the good fight" in terms of promoting healthier and more sustainable eating habits among the children and end-customers.

As a learning experience, Kamila notes, it has also been illuminating.

"The initiative is part of our CEMS business project. Working on this plan has brought us into contact with a raft of diverse partners.





### Sustainability – a new generation of change leaders

Across the CEMS community, there are manifold examples of clever and creative individuals who are taking up the challenge to drive awareness, action and impact in sustainable development.

Magdalena Boryslawska was appointed head of the newly-launched CEMS Club Sustainability Committee at ESADE in Barcelona, which has overseen a number of activities this academic year, including an Eat for the Earth Challenge and a responsible global leadership seminar with the head of sustainability at Inditex subsidiary Stradivarius, Alfred Vernis.

At Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Dr. Diego Stea's CEMS students are driving a raft of initiatives that range from a Social Development Goal task force led by Søren Jeppesen, to Louise Thomsen's Students for Global Goals event targeting students and faculty, and the 2019 Responsibility Day. Organiser, Caroline Aggestam Pontoppidan, highlights the success of this year's event, which will integrate UN SDGs and spotlights a case study from Grundfos: "Responsibility Day 2019 will have a critical focus on SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation as well as SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls."

Fellow CBS student, Emilie Cronje Kronhjem, has also co-developed a singular resource for businesses looking to minimize the environmental impact of their corporate events.

"Single-use plastic bottles, lots of food, and speakers flown in from remote places are common features of conferences and events.

We've had a chance to put our business skills into real-world practice, doing the market research, creating the business, financial, marketing and communications plans working alongside some of the key players in consultancy and social entrepreneurship in Budapest."

It has also been inspirational.

"I've always wanted to know how social vision and the business purpose can be combined in a way that drives impact and secures sustainability. And I don't think I'm alone in this. In my experience, my generation is perhaps more acutely aware of sustainability. We know more about the kinds of problems that are out there. And we also know that there are plenty of people who are clever and creative enough to come up with interesting new solutions to tackle them."



We've put together a sustainable event guide with concrete advice on how to host both small and large events with a reduced ecological footprint." The guide has already been put to good use by the CASE Nordic Summit and Alumni Day 2019, and has been picked up by Denmark's Tuborg Foundation to be distributed to all grant recipients hosting events.

Meanwhile, the Henkel Skill Seminar in Sustainable Packaging garnered positive feedback both for the quality of insight and real-world, interactive business exposure at Rotterdam School of Management (RSM.) CEMS students at RSM have also launched a Good Citizen Card which is sold to Erasmus students and offers discounts at vegetarian or sustainably-focused eateries in the Rotterdam area.

And Prague University of Economics CEMS alumna, Marketa Svobodova, adds that it is very sustainable and also fun to create your own household products from toothpaste to washing powder. She founded a volunteer group RespON which has organised various events around these types of workshops.

#### Sustainability in focus

"There is a will to bring sustainability into focus in terms of what we are doing as students and as members of the CEMS Club," says CEMS student Christopher Stach, Head of the CEMS Club Sustainability Committee at the Stockholm School of Economics.

"The projects that we run have a short-term goal of raising awareness among our peers, but we are also interested in driving really deep understanding and a sense of commitment that goes beyond our time at university, it extends into the way we work and the choices that we make in our professional lives."

A function of this, says Christopher, is to bring best-in-class partners from the CEMS ecosystem such as the H&M Foundation into the school, to share insight and good practice with students. Another initiative is

a sustainability blog that explores the issues, research and emerging themes that are shaping the narrative on sustainability.

"The goal is to really help inform people's decisions in terms of the kinds of jobs they choose after university, and the way that they function within their personal and professional lives – and the kind of impact that they can go on to have in the companies that they work in in the future."

On a practical level, Christopher and his fellow students are driving initiatives that they hope will yield concrete and measurable results.

"Something we've seen working in other schools like The London School of Economics, is the use of reusable coffee cups. Single-use, plastic cups contribute enormously to waste. We are putting together a pan-university project that will replace these with an environmentally friendly, sustainable alternative. It's a wor

And it's exactly the kind of initiative that Plan A's Lubomila Jordanova welcomes.

"Sustainability is such an enormous, complex and multi-dimensional issue, and it's an issue that has excited a good deal of talk, debate and shouting on all sides," she says.

"The problem with shouting is that while it might engender good press for activists, that's all it does. And we need to see far more focus on what's happening on the ground – the concrete actions, activities and practical things that people, communities and businesses are doing that are driving real impact."

While applause and recognition are nice, says Lubomila, they won't change the world.

"What we really need is collaboration. And people are starting to wake up to this. Change will only come if we work together as one powerful and intelligent community."





*"Sustainability is such an enormous, complex and multi-dimensional issue, and it's an issue that has excited a good deal of talk, debate and shouting on all sides [but] the problem with shouting is that while it might engender good press for activists, that's all it does. And we need to see far more focus on what's happening on the ground – the concrete actions, activities and practical things that people, communities and businesses are doing that are driving real impact."*





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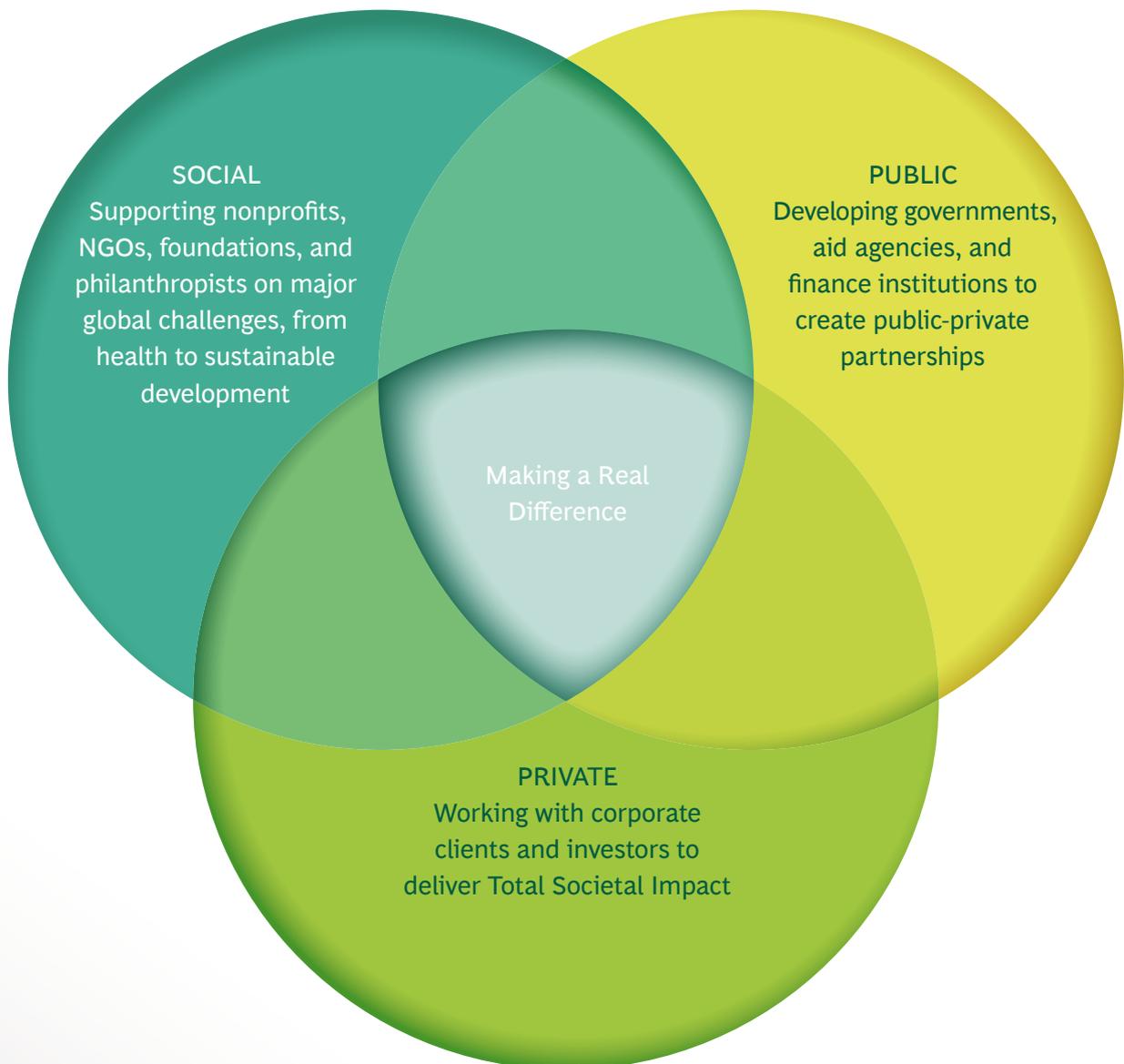
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