

Press Release, 15 June 2012

50+20 calls for radical transformation of Management Education at RIO+20

15 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro – the 50+20 initiative unveiled a vision for the transformation of management education at the RIO+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. The new vision revises the common tenet of being the best in the world in favour of creating businesses that are designed and led to achieve the best for the world.

Business School Lausanne took part in the launch of the 50+20 report as a co-authoring institution. The school was represented by Dr. Katrin Muff, Dean of BSL, who is a member of the 50+20 Steering Committee and one of the driving forces behind the project.

The 50+20 Agenda: Management Education for the World – a summary vision document and short film, was shared with attendees of the 3rd Global Forum for Responsible Management Education, including more than 300 Deans, Directors and representatives from Business Schools and companies attending the United Nations Global Compact RIO+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum. The vision and film was simultaneously launched online at www.50plus20.org.

The 50+20 Agenda and Emerging Benchmarks

The 50+20 Agenda was developed over the course of 18 months through a series of consultative workshops, retreats and meetings across 5 continents with contributions from more than 100 thought leaders and academics, with many more participating in online stakeholder surveys. The 50+20 Agenda also showcases a number of “Emerging Benchmarks”; these are examples of institutions setting new and relevant standards indicative of a collaborative rather than competitive approach. “Emerging Benchmarks” is also the title of the 50+20 mobile exhibit and prototyping platform where “Management Education for the World” is being demonstrated during RIO+20. The exhibit consists of artistically designed and decorated two-seater benches, commissioned from artists around the globe and constructed from reclaimed materials. When arranged in a learning circle the benches are symbolic of a commitment to reclaim management education for the world, and provide a physical metaphor for the collaboratory: a concept central to the 50+20 vision. The benches are being used to host collaboratory prototype sessions during RIO+20.

The vision

In order to create a world where all citizens live well and within the limits of the planet, 50+20 urges action toward a different kind of society with a revised economic framework that is celebrated for its contribution to society and the world. Equally, businesses will need to become intimately involved in this transformation by accepting challenges and responsibilities beyond short-term economic performance.

Providing management education for the world, according to the 50+20 Agenda, involves three fundamental roles:

1. educating and developing globally responsible leaders,
2. enabling business organizations to serve the common good, and
3. engaging in the transformation of business and the economy.

This call of service to society represents the ability of *holding and creating a space* to provide responsible leadership for a sustainable world. It is within this context of holding and creating such a space that the central and unifying element of the 50+20 vision, the *collaboratory*, manifests. The collaboratory can be described as a collaborative and open-source platform where action learning and research join forces, focusing on visceral real-life issues and providing solutions that are driven by issues as opposed to by theory. Within the collaboratory space there is no formal separation between knowledge production and knowledge transfer - a philosophy that is diametrically opposed to the thinking behind the lecture theatre – a conventional space commonly employed in management education.

Given that the very foundations of business and management education are critically examined, the vision concerns business, management and leadership education in general. Stakeholders in this landscape include not only business schools, leadership and executive development programs or corporate universities, but also think tanks, business consultancies and vocational training centers.

About 50+20

50+20 is a collaborative initiative between three organizations: the World Business School Council of Sustainable Business (WBSCSB), the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI) and the Principles of Responsible Management Education (U.N. backed PRME).

The following institutions generously provided financial assistance and are recognized as official co-authors of the 50+20 Agenda: Business School Lausanne (CH), CENTRUM Católica, (PE), Concordia University (CA), Copenhagen Business School (DK), Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, ESADE (ES), ESSEC (FR), ICN Business School Nancy-Metz (FR), Leuphana Universität Lüneburg (DE), Queensland University of Technology (AU), Rajiv Gandhi Indian Institute of Management (IN), Swinburne University of Technology (AU), University of Pretoria (ZA), University of St Gallen (CH), Vienna University of Economics and Business (AU), Zermatt Summit (CH/FR).

50+20 representatives will also present their ideas at the Business Action for Sustainable Development day on June 19th, a high-profile platform for interaction between business leaders and policy-makers.

The 50+20 Agenda foresees a process of engagement with the following implementation priorities:

- *Faculty training and development:* A successful implementation of the vision depends most critically on faculty developing a passion for teaching, learning and discovery. Equally, faculty should be at ease with transdisciplinary approaches, multi-stakeholder engagements and with engaging in public discourses – which would require different types of training and development programs.
- *Creating prototypes of the vision:* Setting up a variety of prototypes dedicated to one or several aspects of the vision allows testing of how the new roles of management education can be interpreted and translated into action. The collaboratory plays a central role in many of these prototypes, both in their

creation and incubation phase, as well as in shaping new forms of education, research and platforms for public engagement.

- *Orienting research toward the common good:* Encouraging the development of collaborative research centers dedicated to transdisciplinary approaches, new future-oriented research methods, as well as new incentives and measures for researchers.
- *New measures for management education:* Implementing the vision requires different incentives and measures of success. Management education organizations requires alternate evaluation and ranking tools, such as new criteria for assessing the value and impact of research, and evaluation of criteria for measuring faculty contributions to society.
- *Celebrating excellence:* An important engine to drive change is to create recognition and awards for successfully living the three roles of the vision. New projects, transformation on an institutional level as well as initiatives and engagements by faculty need to be widely communicated – and praised.
- *Professionalizing the management of schools:* Management education providers are challenged to evolve towards professional management, supported by leadership that is experienced in change management and transformative organizational processes. Many existing senior leaders have not enjoyed appropriate exposure or training to successfully lead the change needed to accomplish such a transformation.

Contact:

- Dr. Katrin Muff, Dean of Business School Lausanne, katrin.muff@bsl-lausanne.ch
- Mark Drewell – mark.drewell@grli.org, +44 7805 568 493

Resources:

- www.50plus20.org
- twitter.com/50plus20

About Business School Lausanne

Business School Lausanne is a leading innovator in business education and ranks 3rd in Switzerland (QS 2011-12 Top 200 Global Business Schools). The school's ACBSP accredited degree programs include BBA and Specialized Masters, full-time modular MBA, Executive MBA and DBA programs. BSL also provides Executive Training in Sustainable Business, General Management and Corporate Finance (with CFA) for qualified working professionals. BSL takes a pragmatic approach to learning by applying theory to practice and is backed by a multidisciplinary faculty of business professionals. BSL attracts students from around the world, creating a multicultural environment of more than 40 nationalities. Established in 1987, BSL is the co-founder of the World Business School Council of Sustainable Business (www.wbscsb.com).