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+ 20

OFFERS

A CLEAR

VISION

CAN BUSINESS SCHOOLS
PRESENT A NEW VISION OF
MANAGEMENT EDUCATION
FOR THE WORLD?

KATRIN MUFF BELIEVES THAT
THROUGH THE 50+20 INITIATIVE
THEY CAN

The World Business School Council of Sustainable Business (WBSCSB, www.wbscsb.com) was founded at the Academy of Management in August 2010 as a think tank. We intended it to serve as a platform for action to ensure the engagement of the business school community in the public discourse of transforming business and the economy towards a sustainable and just world.

In November 2010, when WBSCSB representatives met with the head of the United National (UN) Global Compact in New York, the failure of the Rio+20 conference was widely anticipated.

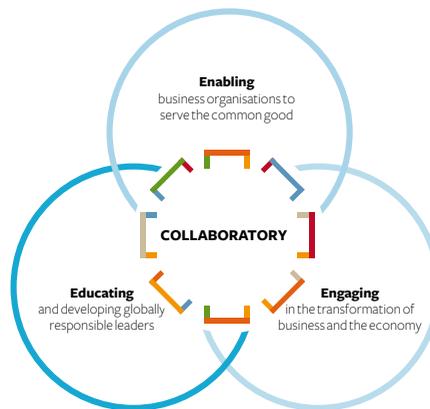
There was concern about facing another Copenhagen. It would be up to civil society and business to try to save the day. But how? The UN was looking for glimmers of hope. WBSCSB promised it would do the (almost) impossible and develop a radically new vision for management education in the 18 months until Rio 2012. We felt that maybe, just maybe, business educators could rise to the occasion and offer a meaningful contribution to a 20th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit.

Back in 1992 that Rio summit had put sustainable development firmly on the global agenda. But while individual scholars have been active since, business schools as a community have failed to take part in the related public dialogue and change process. We felt the time was ripe to shift gear.

In January 2011, WBSCSB joined forces with the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI) and the UN-backed Principles of Management Education (PRME) and launched the 50+20 collaboration – 50 because the future of management education was last significantly examined 50 years ago with the Ford and Carnegie reports and +20 for the two decades since the Rio summit. (See more on who and what 50+20 is on www.50plus20.org or page 3 of the 50+20 agenda, www.50plus20.org/5020-agenda.)

But how does one go about creating a process and a journey that delivers a radically new vision as an end result? The following guiding principles helped:

Figure 1: The 50+20 Vision



Educating

- Transformative learning
- Issue-centered learning
- Reflective practice and Fieldwork

Enabling

- Research in service of society
- Supporting companies towards stewardship
- Accompanying leaders in their transformation

Engaging

- Open access between academia and practice
- Faculty as public intellectuals
- Institutions as role models

Collaboratory

- As the preferred place for stakeholders to meet
- Where all three domains overlap and where the vision truly comes alive
- Collaborative action learning and research platforms organised around regional and global issues

– **A radical vision:** our aim was to set a vision that would serve as a lighthouse for the coming two decades, a vision that can be used as a reference to determine whether we are on the right path rather than a model of incremental improvements starting from our current reality

– **Identifying paradigm shifts:** a radical new vision assumes underlying paradigm shifts. These need to be both clearly articulated and placed in a larger interconnected context (a new kind of a world and society, a new role for business, and a transformation of the economic system)

– **Enabling the vision:** developing a new vision requires both insight into the future as well as understanding the challenges of the past and present. Visioning exercises and analysis were used in a complementary manner in five global sessions during 14 months involving more than 100 contributors

– **Inclusive approach:** it is unlikely that we (scholars, deans and directors) were going to develop something radically new. We had to involve concerned members of the larger community of business and management education (parents, students, alumni, business, NGOs, coaches and trainers, consultants, representatives of the planet and so on)

– **Clarity of the audience:** rather than trying to convince those who believe that the current ways and means are by and large OK, we decided to write a supporting and inspiring document for a strong minority that understands that our current system is based on flawed assumptions



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The 50+20 collaboration: 50 because the future of management education was last significantly examined 50 years ago with the Ford and Carnegie reports

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...and +20 for the two decades since the Rio summit, and the coming two decades the vision seeks to influence

Such a radical vision has built-in advantages and disadvantages. While it potentially offers a clear direction to pursue, it does not necessarily offer concrete solutions on how to get there. The challenge lies in overcoming the implementation gap. Once we had a good sense of the vision, we started embracing this implementation challenge.

Early on, and in the hope of sparking a dialogue, we established lists of concrete recommendations for all key stakeholder groups: the full range of providers of management education, clients and buyers such as business leaders and potential students, funders including policy makers, and influencers such as media, ranking and rating agencies, and accreditation bodies.

These discussions led us to understand the paramount importance of proposing a process of engagement rather than ready-made solutions. (The gap analysis is outlined in figure 5 on page 27 of the 50+20 agenda, (www.50plus20.org/5020-agenda.) Some institutions may opt for a “tip toe” approach, testing the waters by implementing some suitable elements of the visions into an existing programme or structure. Other will opt for a “deep dive”, a full organisational commitment by making the vision the fundamental basis for engagement in the fields

of management education. Some activities will focus on removing existing barriers first, while others may be oriented towards enabling innovative new solutions.



“” *These discussions led us to understand the paramount importance of proposing a process of engagement rather than ready-made solutions*

To enable institutional change, we propose a simple gap analysis and as an accompanying process the methodology of the “collaboratory” (an open space for learning and research). This will ensure inclusion of stakeholders and the creation of a learning community committed to develop and co-create solutions that drive implementation.

The 50+20 vision represents a call to service and is embodied in the ability of holding and creating a space to provide responsible leadership for the world. The collaboratory reflects this intention.

Beyond institutional change, there are a number of broader challenges that concern the entire sector. We have identified six areas of priority (more details in Figure 6 on page 31 of the 50+20 agenda, www.50plus20.org/5020-agenda) for implementation – these represent the key levers of change:

1. Faculty training and development (programmes for existing faculty as well as new PhD and DBA students, seconding faculty into activities that are important for society, pairing academic faculty with teachers of a professional background for new student learning environments)
2. Creating prototypes of the vision (secure funding for a number of new business schools to showcase the vision, launching “pop-up” business schools in emerging and developing countries, creating regional or issue-centred “collaboratories”)
3. Orienting research towards the common good (focus on inter- and trans-disciplinary, future-oriented research, creating leadership sanctuaries)
4. New measures for management education (a stakeholder-managed tool to rank business schools, developing criteria for assessing the contribution of research to society, new evaluation criteria for faculty)
5. Celebrating excellence (creating awards related to the enablers of the vision, celebrating the social engagement of faculty)
6. Professionalising the management of schools (executive development of existing administrative leaders so that they and their institutions can serve as role models).

So what is the 50+20 vision all about? We envision three new roles for management education.

First, we refocus education to ensure that we educate and develop globally responsible leaders.

Second, we transform research into an applied field, with the clear purpose of enabling business organisations to serve the common good.

Third, we add a new role for management educators to engage in the transformation of business and the economy by joining the ongoing public debate. As such, our vision is represented by the philosophy of a collaboratory – an open space for learning and research for stakeholders.

Broadening the skills, experiences and competencies of faculty represents the single biggest lever in achieving the 50+20 vision. A number of competencies are currently significantly under-represented in business education. In ascending order of complexity they are:

- Interdisciplinary business knowledge across all subject disciplines, matched with knowledge of ethics, entrepreneurship, leadership, sustainability and technology
- A concern for broad, up-to-date, trans-disciplinary knowledge
- Exposure to emerging practices and tools for measuring and evaluating economic, environmental and social concerns across all fields of business
- Mastery of systemic thinking and risk analysis together with other approaches that enable holistic decision making in a fast-changing environment
- Expertise in the methodologies of action learning and the creation of effective action learning platforms as well as whole-person learning and person-centred learning
- Advanced facilitation, coaching and mentoring skills to complement traditional lectures

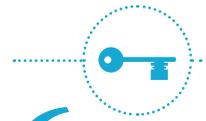
We anticipate a far greater diversity of educators and researchers, including discipline-oriented, trans-disciplinary, collaborative and practice-oriented faculty. In future, collaboration across disciplines and different occupations and life-styles will become the rule rather than the exception. Compensation, selection and promotion schemes for both education and research faculty will grow to reflect these requirements in a stimulating and transparent manner.

So what will the business school of the future look like? We have collected and reviewed many emerging examples and projects from around the world that point towards the emergence of our vision. These emerging benchmarks (see www.50plus20.org/benchmarks) may serve as inspiration and examples for those interested in implementing the vision. At my own school, our relatively new multi-stakeholder academic advisory board unanimously decided to “deep dive” into implementing the 50+20 vision so that our small boutique school may serve as a real-life learning platform.

You are invited to come and join us in the implementation, which we will set up as a real-life learning laboratory open for co-learners and creators. And, hopefully, we will hear from many other initiatives starting around the world. Success to us at 50+20 is as many people as possible adopting and implementing the vision in their own ways.

So, have we achieved our mission in Rio? Our initiative quite obviously touched the participants at the PRME Global Forum and those who took part in the three parallel “collaboratory” on hunger, gender issues and anti-corruption we ran together with the related PRME working groups for the UN Global Compact Global Sustainability Forum. And our circular benches installation was quite an attraction at the People’s Summit.

Yet, it remains to be seen if what we did was more than a storm in a teacup. What matters is what happens next. Join us in shaping a world worth living in and begin by investing eight minutes to watch the film: www.50plus20.org/film. **gf**



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The six key levers of change are:

- Faculty training
- Creating prototypes
- Orientating research
- New measures
- Celebrating excellence
- Professionalising

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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