



The 50+20 vision has ignited a flame that illuminates a path towards the future of management education. **John North** and **Hamid Bouchikhi** describe the latest steps on the journey

# Cadres

for the common good



PHOTOS: LEFT, MIDDLE & ABOVE © 50420



“”

*When handled responsibly, however, a spark can ignite a much-needed source of light, a torch lighting the path of the carrier and those in the vicinity trying to find their way forward*

9

The action-oriented learning programme is designed over nine months with four face-to-face working sessions each held over three days and peer-to-peer work in between meetings

With the dry winter months encroaching on large parts of sub-Saharan Africa it is not uncommon to spot and often smell wildfires or *veld* fires as they are known locally. These wildfires occur in the open rural spaces of the African grasslands or woodlands (the *veld*) showing no regard for boundaries and fences or the national speed limit – often racing and raging out of control, reaching farms and settlements hundreds of kilometres from the initial spark.

Because the occurrence of wildfires are often the result of a simple insignificant spark and generally due to human action or neglect, one easily forgets that they also form part of the natural renewal process in an area where roughly 70% of the natural ecosystem (within South African borders at least) is adapted to this harsh but necessary reality.

When handled responsibly, however, a spark can ignite a much-needed source of light, a torch lighting the path of the carrier and those in the vicinity trying to find their way forward.

This seems to ring true for the impact and energy of the 50+20 vision.

The time and conditions are ripe for a new idea, a spark if you will. Some will perceive the spark as a threat and source of a pending wildfire. Others will protect and nurture the flame in the hope that it will help shine a light on the path of renewal.

And so, in the last few months, we have seen individuals and organisations across the management education ecosystem ignited by the essence of the 50+20 vision, working pro-actively and often in partnership to make its impact felt.

A number of business schools are in the process of piloting “collaboratories” within their stakeholder networks, and international and regional teams of management educators and scholars are using the roles and enablers described by 50+20 in their daily research, teaching and other duties.

During the 2012 Academy of Management Presidential Address by President Anne S Tsui the 50+20 vision was held up as an example of management education “Daring to Care” while the latest revision of the EQUIS standards includes a new chapter on “Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability” that requires business schools to adopt core elements of 50+20 ideals to remain accredited.

A recent testament to 50+20’s impact is the announcement in March that the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI), which continues to act as holding space of the 50+20 vision, entered into a long-term strategic partnership with EFMD and AACSB International as the operational arm of their shared ambition to accelerate change in responsible management education.

But talk of renewal will come to nothing unless groups and individuals with the ability and willingness to shift management education towards the common good are equipped and mobilised.

As the vision of business and management education being celebrated for its service to society catches on there is naturally an increased demand for practical support in moving forward in its implementation. The hard work of transforming our institutions and offerings has only just begun.

The GRLI General Assembly ("Africa Leads" – Stellenbosch, South Africa, November 2012) signified a transition phase in the 50+20 work with the scoping of two groundbreaking initiatives aimed at:

- equipping a global cohort of programme directors and faculty to drive innovation in their bachelors, masters, doctoral and executive education programmes
- supporting institutions in bolstering their doctoral programmes, which are the main training ground for future faculty and professionals beyond the MBA

The resulting programmes and networks provide an opportunity for deeper exploration of the 50+20 vision and much needed practical opportunities and initiatives to develop cadres of management educators and scholars that serve the common good as opposed to the status quo. ("Cadres" in this context are defined as groups trained for a particular purpose who drive large-scale transformation in their organisations, industry or society.)

#### **A global network of committed peers**

Since GRLI's creation in 2004 it has sought the right moment to launch a well-grounded global programme for the hands-on review and re-engineering of business school and corporate university programmes.

The Innovation Cohort, which will start work in October 2013, aims at gathering and equipping dedicated change agents from around the world. It will involve mainly programme directors but may also appeal to other faculty members and senior administrators.



*Since GRLI's creation in 2004 it has sought the right moment to launch a well-grounded global programme for the hands-on review and re-engineering of business school and corporate university programmes*



The programme aims to enable business school, leadership development and corporate university leaders to work in a facilitated peer environment with the insights developed through the 50+20 project and to develop the capacity of programmes to deliver the three dimensions of the 50+20 vision: educating globally responsible leaders; enabling sustainable business; and engaging with societal transformation.

The format will be "facilitated co-learning" embodying the collaboratory concept that is central to the 50+20 vision. Skilled facilitation and the participant-directed approach will help the global cohort to move from deep reflection to insight and rapid prototyping. By the end of the programme participants will be working with their own implementation process already under way within their sphere of responsibility.

The action-oriented learning programme is designed over nine months with four face-to-face working sessions each held over three days and peer-to-peer work in between meetings.

Each participant is to deliver a specific self-determined outcome for his/her school and the cohort will jointly prepare a report on their work to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on transforming management education.

#### **A global doctoral alliance for sustainability and responsibility**

A previous *Global Focus* article by Katrin Muff – ("50+20 offers a clear vision", *Global Focus* Volume 6, Issue 3) on the implementation challenges for 50+20 pointed out that broadening the skills, experiences and competencies of faculty represents the single biggest lever in achieving the 50+20 vision.

Doctoral programmes, as the natural breeding ground for the next generation of tenured faculty, seemed like an appropriate starting point.





PHOTOS © 50+20

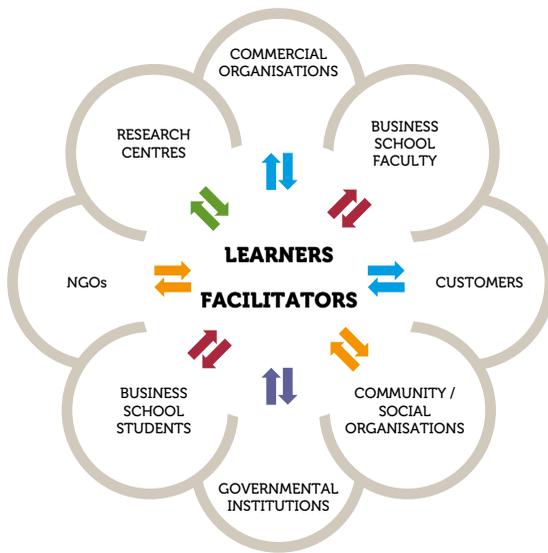


TABLE 1  
Some required faculty competencies and skills identified by 50+20

LEARNING ORIENTED	RESEARCH ORIENTED
Interdisciplinary business knowledge beyond silos	Immersion and understanding of trans-disciplinary issues globally and locally
Coaching and personal development guidance	Sustainability knowledge integrating economic, environmental and societal concerns
Action-, whole person- and person-centred learning facilitation	Traditional subject knowledge enriched with ethics, entrepreneurship, leadership, sustainability, technology and innovation
Systems thinking and risk analysis for holistic decision-making	Future-oriented and issue-relevant research methodologies
Networking capabilities for field projects and immersion with stakeholders	Collaborative skills to interact with broad stakeholders across disciplines and sectors

**“What do doctoral studies look like in the context of the 50+20 vision?”**

With this question in mind a group of deans, directors, PhD students and administrators met in March 2013 to scope the work of the 50+20 Global Doctoral Alliance (GDA). More than 20 institutions provided virtual or direct input to the two-day design session with two parallel streams of work emerging:

**1: Foundational doctoral-level module on Sustainability and Responsibility**

Jointly developed and delivered by GDA participants, this module will enable participating institutions with existing doctoral programmes to offer a percentage of credits required towards a doctoral track or concentration in “Sustainability and Responsibility”.

The module is meant to address the core knowledge and skill requirements at doctoral level and its design allows for complementary specialisation modules to be added in future.

**2: 50+20 doctoral student network**

It became apparent that doctoral students working in the areas of sustainability and responsibility may benefit from the opportunity to peer review, co-write and meet (face-to-face or via virtual colloquia) with other students and senior academics. Work is underway to identify participants and convene an online network and sharing platform for existing doctoral students and supervisors focused on sustainability and responsibility.

**Conclusion**

50+20 has been and remains an open-source vision. No one holds the patent to put it into production. Irrespective of the degree of our individual and institutional abilities and energy to implement the vision, it is clear that increasingly others will step forward and nurture the flame that has been ignited.

GRLI is going beyond calls for radical change. By providing a practical starting point for business and management educators who recognise the urgent need to transform the entire ecosystem, including their own institutions and offerings, and who are prepared to work collaboratively to bring about such change, it hopes to develop a cadre of management educators and scholars who aim not to be the best in the world but the best for the world.



**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

John North is an associate of the Albert Luthuli Centre for Responsible Leadership (University of Pretoria) and heads up the GRLI Africa office. He can be reached at [john.north@grii.org](mailto:john.north@grii.org)

Hamid Bouchikhi is Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship and Academic Director of the Entrepreneurship Center, ESSEC Business School, France, and Academic Champion of the Sustainability Initiative at ESSEC

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

For more information on the Doctoral Alliance and Innovation Cohort including a list of institutions that are keeping the flame alive please visit: [www.50plus20.org/projects](http://www.50plus20.org/projects)