

Servant-Leadership across Crisis Situations
Symposium

Monday, 4 May 2015, 13.15-17.30 p.m.
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Now, more than ever, a leader's capacity to both direct an organisation and its people, while at the same time work in their service, is being recognized as a vital capacity for creating a sustainable organisation. Servant-leadership is a leadership principle embedded in a way of life, which has been recognized and expounded upon in all parts of the world throughout history, and across all cultures and communities. The recent economic crisis again reminds us of its importance as an antidote to the selfish and bonus-oriented behaviours we have witnessed and the economic/societal consequences we have seen.

The symposium *Servant-Leadership across Crisis Situations* is the 11th in an annual symposium series embedded in the Master course Cross Cultural Management. The symposium is a meeting place for students and professionals to strengthen the link between theory and business practice. This event goes beyond the cognitive approach to explore our inner strengths and vulnerabilities within people and organisations. How do people cope with crisis in their working life and through experiences of vulnerability develop personal strengths? An organisational crisis such as unemployment, IT failure, closure of a department or clashing corporate cultures after a merger, may turn out to become an opportunity. Servant-leadership is expressed in both handling (the prevention of) a crisis and at the same time creating a durable corporate culture where people feel safe. For companies this implies matching individual and organisational needs while serving employees through all seasons of business and personal life. The event is take place on the 4th of May 2015, a national Memorial Day in the Netherlands, which pays tribute to all Dutch civilians who have died in wars and peacekeeping missions. This day gives our theme, Crisis Situations, a special historical meaning.

We are delighted this symposium brings together cutting-edge thinkers and practitioners across disciplines, leveraging the global human needs to learn, serve and lead in their unique way. The symposium will include keynote presentations, workshops and a plenary debate to shed light on the gentle art of serving and leading, and how leaders can serve to acknowledge each others fragility and strengths. In dialogue with the audience, we aim to explore leadership dilemmas that arise across cultural orientations, responding to the needs of the other in times of crisis.

We invite you to learn more about SERVUS and look forward to meeting you at this special event.

On behalf of the organising team,

prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars & dr. Sylvia van de Bunt-Kokhuis
Chairpersons of symposium and SERVUS co-directors

Programme

- 13.15 Registration-desk in gathering space, outside the Symposium Hall (14A-00)
- 13.30 *Opening* by **Prof. mr. dr. Jaap W. Winter**, Chair of Executive Board, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
- 13.40 *Introduction - Contextualizing the symposium theme:* by **Prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars** and **Dr. Sylvia van de Bunt**
- 14.10 *Beating the odds: A story of pain and success from the land of Sheba*, by **Prof. dr Nabil Sultan**, Dean of the College of Business Administration, A'Sharqiyah University, Ibra, Oman, and SERVUS Visiting Professor VU Amsterdam
- 14.50 Transfer to workshop rooms
- 15.00 Servant-Leadership Across Crisis Situations will be highlighted from different perspectives by the following dedicated workshop leaders:
- WORKSHOP I (15A-00): *Storytelling on Forgiveness after the Second World War*, by **Judy Mensch** of the Corrie ten Boom Foundation, www.corrietenboom.com
 - WORKSHOP II (9A-32) : *Effective Decision Making in Crisis Situations*, by **Egbert Mulder MSc.** Director YIC, www.yic.nl
 - WORKSHOP III (2A-16): *Emergency operations and the serving role of communicative leaders*, by **Dr. ir. Kees Boersma**, Associate Professor Crisis Management, Faculty of Social Sciences, VU University Amsterdam
 - WORKSHOP IV (9A-29): *Crisis management and different lenses on the World*, by **Johan Poelman MSc**, Housing cooperation, www.innergo.nl and **Jeffrey Schwerzel MSc.** Antropologist & Reserve Major Royal Netherlands Army
 - WORKSHOP V (7A-02): *When Crisis is Opportunity in Chinese organisations*, by **Dr. Mandy Cao**, CEO CHEER China, www.cheereef.com
- The Workshops include areas of research and organizational practice such as SL and nurturing people at work and in life, moving moments in your life, pathways to success or failure, vulnerability of a human being in the current job market, fragility and strength of youngsters building their life-paths via social media, etc.
- 16.00 Refreshments in the gathering space, outside Symposium Hall
- 16.30 *Emotional abuse and neglect in the workplace: the case of GVB, the Amsterdam public transport company*, by **Dr. Joost Kampen**, management consultant Van de Bunt Amsterdam
- 16.50 Panel discussion with workshop leaders, delegates and MSc students: *Meeting of minds and hearts. How to build communities in times of crises and learn from each other?*
- 17.20 *Reflections* by **Fons Trompenaars** and future perspective for research and practitioners
- 17.30 Closure