

***Servant-Leadership and Societal Engagement***  
**Symposium**

Monday, 8th May 2017, 13.15-17.15 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 of corporate leaders and the economic/societal consequences we have witnessed.

This symposium *Servant-Leadership and Societal Engagement* is the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 explores the power of societal engagement; how can leaders create an organization in service of the employees, customers and society at large? Societal consciousness is high on the agenda of academia, public services and industry. Increasingly, companies plan to align with The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Major SDG steps are taken by business leaders towards a sustainable society. Corporate engagement to humanize underserved groups will not only bring social justice in society (UCLA, p.2), it will also improve the internal working climate for employees. What can we learn from societal engaged business stories in Africa, the Middle East and beyond? How can leaders become powerful engines of organizational and societal progress?

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. Servant-Leaders initiate actions, where followers find inspiration in the positive impact for a wider world. This symposium will include case studies, keynote presentations, workshops and a plenary debate to shed light on the gentle art of serving and leading, and how leaders get to acknowledge their role in society. In dialogue with the audience, we aim to explore leadership dilemmas that arise in different organizational contexts, responding to the needs of employees and society.

We look forward to meeting you at this special event.

On behalf of the organising team,

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

## Programme

- 13.15 Registration-desk in gathering space, outside the Symposium Hall
- 13.30 Opening. *Societal engagement; the African voice*, by **Prof. dr. Enno Masurel**, Director and Founder of the Center for Entrepreneurship at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, CfE@VU
- 13.45 Contextualizing the symposium theme: by **Prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars** and **dr. Sylvia van de Bunt**
- 14.10 *Serving Communities: Reflections on the Hadhrami and Quaker Business Leaders*, by **Prof. dr. Nabil Sultan**, Dean of the College of Business Administration, A'Sharqiyah University, Ibra, Oman, and SERVUS Visiting Professor VU Amsterdam
- 14.30 Transfer to workshop rooms
- 14.40 Servant-Leadership and Societal Engagement will be highlighted from different perspectives by the following dedicated workshop leaders:
- WORKSHOP I: *Sustainable Transition; How to work towards an active change*, by **Ilyes Machkor** and **Ivar Maas**, initiators Sustainable Transition Project VU
  - WORKSHOP II: *Community Engagement; A way to make the big idea practical*, by **Britt Bakker**, SERVUS assistant
  - WORKSHOP III: *Social enterprise trough encounter by Syrian refugees*, by **Esseline van de Sande**, Founding Director The Room of Listening, [www.theroomoflistening.com](http://www.theroomoflistening.com)
  - WORKSHOP IV: *'Enactus VU: What do you see?: Problems or Opportunity?'* by **Léon Polman**, Project manager EnactusVU, [www.enactusvu.nl](http://www.enactusvu.nl)
  - WORKSHOP V: *Leading and serving local communities in Peru through creating drinking water*, by **Neil Willard**, Founding director of the Creating Water Foundation, [www.creatingwater.nl](http://www.creatingwater.nl)
- 15.50 Refreshments in the gathering space, outside Symposium Hall. With Speakers Corner empowered by young social enterprises such as **Alpaca d'Oro**, **Green Office VU**, and **Enactus VU** where delegates can walk by and engage in a fruitful conversation.
- 16.20 *The Human Cities Initiative; an innovative and caring leadership practice*, by **Julia Huss**, Human Cities Program Manager AkzoNobel, [www.akzonobel.com/about-us/what-we-do/our-human-cities-initiative](http://www.akzonobel.com/about-us/what-we-do/our-human-cities-initiative)
- 16.40 Panel discussion with speakers and delegates: *Meeting of minds and hearts. How to build societal engaged organizations?*
- 17.05 *Reflections* by **Fons Trompenaars** on future perspective for research and practitioners.
- 17.15 Closure and farewell

## Sources of inspiration:

- Barrera, D. K. Kukahiko, L. Willner and K. O'Byrne (2016, UCLA). Realizing a critical framework for service learning at a public research university. In: K.M. Soria & T.D. Mitchell, (Eds.) (2016), *Civic Engagement and Community Service at Research Universities: Engaging Undergraduates for Social Justice, Social Change, and Responsible Citizenship*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Choongo, P., E. van Burg, L. Paas, and E. Masurel (2016). Factors influencing the identification of sustainable opportunities by SMEs: Empirical evidence from Zambia, *Sustainability*, 8 (1), 81.
- Miller, J. and Parker, L. (2013). *Everybody's Business. The unlikely story of how big business can fix the world*. Biteback Publishing, London.
- Sande, E. van de (2016). *Ontmoetingen met Syriërs: Achtergrond en cultuur van onze nieuwe burens*, Informatie Verre Reizen