

# Servant-Leadership Across Disciplines



Now, more than ever, a leader's capacity to both direct the organization and its people, while at the same time work in their service, is being recognized as a vital capacity for creating a sustainable organization. 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 from ancient times on, and across all cultures. 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.

At its simplest, servant-leadership is driven by the motivation of enabling others work more effectively and be successful. Servant-leadership thus means leading a group or organisation in the service of people, be they clients, customers, employees, partners, colleagues and/or members of your network. Integrating both head and heart, servant-leadership does not stop there. It expands as a principle to serve the community and act as a steward of the environment and all that inhabit it. Culturally speaking there are different ways of realizing this aspiration.

As the 21st century progresses it is clear that leaders in all areas of society are faced with increasingly complex challenges. At the personal, professional and societal level, leadership requires listening to the needs of the other to bridge different meanings and visions and create interdisciplinary solutions which are beneficial to all. What are the talents and challenges of those working and leading in other fields and academic disciplines? Listening to other disciplines even in the close proximity of the VU community; where are one's own assumptions about leadership challenged? What have we learned so far in conducting interdisciplinary research on servant-leadership internationally and at the VU? How can VU students and scholars across the disciplines build on each other's creative ideas and talents to deepen each other's insights and enrich the VU identity?

The symposium Servant-Leadership across Disciplines aims to explore some of these questions, comparing cases of servant-leadership practices across disciplines at home and worldwide. Using a cross-cultural approach we wish to serve the learning needs of future generations in developing servant-leaders for the corporate (non-corporate) world. For the symposium at the VU on 2 May 2011, we are delighted that we have found VU experts from different disciplines willing to present their insights about challenges of living, teaching and researching servant-leadership. For SLCRE, it is a next step from passion to action.

On behalf of the organizing team,

Prof. Fons Trompenaars & dr Sylvia van de Bunt-Kokhuis  
Chairpersons of symposium and SLCRE directors

# Program: 2 May 2011

## Programme

- 12.30 *Meet and Greet in Foyer*, Registration-desk near Auditorium.
- 13.00 *Welcome* in Auditorium by **Prof. dr Fons Trompenaars**, Co-Director SLCRE.
- 13.30 *Introduction* by **Prof. dr Harmen Verbruggen**, Dean FEWEB VU.
- 13.40 *Natural and servant leadership*, by **Prof. dr Mark van Vugt**, Department of Social&Organizational Psychology VU, [www.professormarkvanvugt.com](http://www.professormarkvanvugt.com).
- 14.00 Transfer to workshop rooms in BelleVUe building.
- 14.10 Servant-leadership across Disciplines will be highlighted from different perspectives by the following dedicated workshop leaders:
- WORKSHOP 1 (Room BV 0H-19): *Leadership, reward and positive behavior support*, by **dr. Marius Rietdijk**, FEWEB, founder of ADRIBA Institute VU.
- WORKSHOP II (Room BV 0H-20): *Conversion, sin, salvation and other crucial business concepts; an historical view on servant-leadership*, by **dr. Maarten Wisse**, Faculty of Theology VU.
- WORKSHOP III (Room BV 0H-21): *Case: community building and medical care in South-African townships*, by **Prof. dr Marceline van Furth**, Desmond Tutu chair, VUmc Pediatrician, [www.tututum.com](http://www.tututum.com) , [www.kids-info.nl](http://www.kids-info.nl).
- WORKSHOP IV (Room BV 0H-54): *Rethinking and redesigning the VU's commitment to its institutional social responsibility on a global scale*, by **Kees Kouwenaar**, Director Centre for International Cooperation VU.
- WORKSHOP V (Room 1H26): *Case studies on servant-leadership across disciplines*, by **Bart Aupers**, FEWEB Master thesis on CEOs, servant-leadership and succession planning, **Laura Doorneweerd** FEWEB graduate and director of Gooisch Theaterhuis, [www.ikwiltheater.nl](http://www.ikwiltheater.nl).
- 15.10 COFFEE & TEA BREAK in Reception Hall across from Auditorium.
- 15.45 *Servant-leadership across landscapes*, by Fons Trompenaars, of behalf of **Tom Cummings (REGRETS)**, co-author of 'Leadership Landscapes', visiting faculty at the University of Cambridge, Judge Institute UK.
- 15.55 Panel Discussion: *Meeting of minds, how to connect disciplines and learn from each other?*  
Introduction by **Prof. dr Marceline van Furth** and **Prof. dr George Harinck**, director Historical Documentation Centre VU. Panel members: **Ronald Kroeze** MA, History Department VU, PhD researcher on history of servant-leadership and Prof. dr Marceline van Furth. Chaired by **dr Harry Wels** (FSW, initiator of the VU Desmond Tutu chairs programme) and **dr Sylvia van de Bunt-Kokhuis** (SLCRE, co-director).
- 17.00 Closure and review of today's event: *VU and diversity; a call for servant-leadership*, by Prof. dr Bert Musschenga, Faculty of Philosophy, Director of Blaise Pascal Institute VU, co-editor of 'Pionieren in diversiteit'.
- 17.15 Refreshments in Reception Hall across from the Auditorium.