

Servant-Leadership Across Life paths
Symposium
Provisional program

Monday, 6 October 2014, 13.15-18.00 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.

At its simplest, servant-leadership is driven by the motivation of enabling others to work more effectively and successfully. Servant-leadership, thus, means leading a group or organisation in the service of clients, customers, employees, partners, colleagues and/or members of society. This calls for a compassionate kind of leader, a leader who is able to integrate different perspectives, for example reconcile company values with profit, or the needs of the inner self with the common societal good. Integrating 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.

At the personal, professional and societal level leadership requires listening to the needs of the other, and empathy to bridge different meanings from various angles of society. Being able to conceptualize the future and motivate people towards a common vision are, next to listening and empathy, key capacities. Culturally speaking there are different ways of realizing these aspirations.

The symposium *Servant-Leadership Across Life-paths*, on 6 October 2014, is the 10th in an annual symposium series embedded in the Master course Careers and Organisations. It 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 motivations through diverse walks of life. What can we learn from different people in various paths of life about servant-leadership in organisations? How can organisations mindfully nurture reciprocal connections among people's life-paths, to better develop their career potential? How do people cope with hardship in their career and nevertheless develop personal strengths, without the job security of the past? In the global world of today it is key for people to give and take in all career steps of life, through amongst others volunteers, family members, and social entrepreneurs. For companies this implies matching individual and organisational needs while serving employees through learning and talent growth in all seasons of life.

We are delighted this symposium brings together cutting-edge thinkers 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 how leaders can serve and encourage cohesion in a community, both face-to-face and online. In dialogue with the audience, we aim to explore leadership dilemmas that arise across cultural and lifeline orientations, responding to the needs and talents of others. Or like Nelson Mandela stated in his autobiographical book *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994): "For to be free is not merely to cast of one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

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
- 13.30 Opening and contextualizing the symposium theme: by **prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars** and **dr. Sylvia van de Bunt**
- 14.10 *The supportive role of a spouse during a career-transition period*, by **Evgenia Lysova MSc**, researcher Amsterdam Business Research Institute, VU Amsterdam
- 14.35 *Coaching and personal advice to support your career*, by **FEWEB Career Services**.
www.feweb.vu.nl/careers
- 14.50 Transfer to workshop rooms
- 15.00 Servant-Leadership Across Life paths will be highlighted from different perspectives by the following dedicated workshop leaders:
- WORKSHOP I: *Lifelong Learning in the Digital Age; serving communities through deep learning*, by **dr Sui Lin Goei**, Professor of Special Educational Needs, Windesheim/VU Amsterdam
 - WORKSHOP II: *Autobiographic storytelling of an organisation*, by **Johan Poelman MSc** and **Maud Bartelds**, Housing cooperation, www.innergo.nl:
 - WORKSHOP III: *Meditation as leadership tool for reducing suffering and creating happiness in all paths of life*, by **dr Marius Rietdijk**, Founding Director of ADRIBA, VU Amsterdam
www.adriba.vu.nl
 - WORKSHOP VI: *International comparative research on pathways to success*, by **Isminta Waldring**, Msc, PhD researcher in Pathways to Success project,
www.elitesproject.eu/pathways-to-success, Faculty of Social Sciences, VU Amsterdam.

The Workshops include areas of research and organizational practice such as SL and nurturing career paths, 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.

- 16.05 Refreshments and information posters in the gathering space outside Symposium Hall
- 16.40 *The journey through the Lof labyrinth*, by **Jolanda Holwerda MA**, Founding Director of Lof Media, for women with ambition, www.lofonline.nl
- 17.10 Panel discussion with workshop leaders, delegates and MA students: *Meeting of minds and hearts. How to build communities across pathways of life and learn from each other?*
- 17.45 *Reflections* by **Ed Voerman**, Founding Director of Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership Europe, www.gcsleu.com
- 18.00 Closure