

ICSB GAZETTE

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A WORLD OF EMPATHY IS NEEDED

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"The challenge for entrepreneurs, policymakers, researchers, and employees, is to consider the Humane Entrepreneurship model very carefully, specifically, ensuring entrepreneurship is coupled with the foundation on empathy."



A few years ago, Professor Ki-Chan and his colleagues, Drs. Ayman El Tarabishy and Zong T. Bae, put forth the novel concept of Humane Entrepreneurship as it relates to interactions in the workplace. Their ground breaking work outlined a model whereby “as countries and organizations move towards holistic growth, enterprises should extend their priorities beyond the profit margin. Instead, companies “should shift this focus onto its people, the environment, and society.

What is interesting about this concept is its relevance to the times in which we live. In the age of the 4th Industrial Revolution, the re-centering of enterprises based upon humanity is a 180-degree departure from the impending reality of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in the workplace. How then should the entrepreneurial community bring together artificial intelligence and humanity in order to create a harmonious work environment?

The 4th Industrial Revolution tells us that the “rise of the machines” will reduce the need for humans in the workplace. According to some estimates, as much as 40% of all human jobs that currently exist will be made obsolete by machines. If this true, the manner in which AI-robots or machines relate to those few humans that are in the workplace is of great concern. The lack of empowerment and equality between man and machine may not create a thriving ecosystem.

The success of the Humane Entrepreneurship model, intended to reshape the way entrepreneurs and employees interact, centers on empathy. In order to understand why empathy is so important to this model, it is necessary to dig a little deeper into the “humane” vs enterprise mindset.

The humane (or employee) side seeks empowerment, engagement, equality, ethics, in a holistic ecosystem. The enterprise (employer) side on the other hand would like employees to show enthusiasm, enlightenment, excellence, envisioning, and experimentation. What would bridge the gap in the difference in mindsets is empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand and share in the feelings of others. It isn't clear that the developers of these AI-robots have built in emotions into their functionality. A lack of empathy between AI-robots and humans could create a serious hostile environment.

The challenge for entrepreneurs, policymakers, researchers, and employees, is to consider the Humane Entrepreneurship model very carefully, specifically, ensuring entrepreneurship is coupled with the foundation on empathy. It is imperative that whatever direction the 4th Industrial Revolution goes, empathy must remain at the core of any new economic paradigm that emerges.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, serves as “a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity.” Entrepreneurship, as referenced in the 2030 Agenda, is not only critical to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth but can also catalyze progress toward the twin goals of prosperity and peace. (International Peace Institute “IPI)



The 17 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are about eliminating some of the inequalities that exist within the global community by 2030. The International Council for Small Business (ICSB) in partnership with the UN Permanent Mission for Argentina (with support from Mariano Mayer, National Secretary for Entrepreneurs and SMEs, Ambassador Martín García Moritán, and Dr. Rubén Ascúa), led the charge that connected the support of the SDGs with the recognition that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were crucial to the 2030 SDG attainment. A world that works for human, must all be a world that shows genuine empathy as well.

In 2016, ICSB engaged with policy-makers and non-profits on the need for guiding principles that would establish what entrepreneurs and small business owners should consider when bringing creativity and innovations to the marketplace. In June of that year, ICSB, under the leadership of then President Ki-Chan Kim, held the opening of its World Congress at the United Nations. Notable supporters attended in person and remotely, including former UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon and Prince Constantijn Van Oranje (Netherlands). Also in attendance were government ministers and leaders (Egypt- Dr. Sahar Nasr, ArgentinaMariano Mayer, US SBA AdministratorMaria Contreras-Sweet, South KoreaDr. Young-Sup Joo, New Zealand- Craig Foss, Kuwait-Dr. Mohammed Al-Zuhair and Indonesia- Mr. Anak Puspayoga). At the conclusion of this panel, the ICSB declaration called for “a dedicated day set aside by the UN annually to recognize the importance of small and medium enterprises in achieving the sustainable development goals.” The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as outline by the UN are based on development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The ICSB declaration showed that creativity and innovation by SMEs, infused with empathy, could significantly contribute to the achievement of the goal of 2030.

This recognition of entrepreneurship and sustainability wrapped by the “ribbon” of empathy has begun to make inroads. In 2017, South Korean President Moon Jae-in stated at the United Nations that “growth is led by job creation and people enjoy equal opportunities and the fruit of growth ... a people-centered economy.” The people-centered reference is the concept of empathy as it relates to entrepreneurship and employment. A tipping point in 2018, that showed that empathy was indeed a key component of entrepreneurship, was the inaugural Italy- Salerno University Conference, “Social Innovation Humane Entrepreneurship from Policy to Action.” Professor and conference leader, Dr. Roberto Parente, convened leaders such as Chantal Line Carpentier (UNCTAD), Claudio Gbitosi (Giffoni Film Festival), David Storey (University of Sussex), and Andrea Piccaluga (Sant’Anna di Pisa).

The focus on the changing nature of the “entrepreneurial behavior” made it clear that today’s entrepreneurs care more than just purely self-interests and financial motivations. Doing good economically and doing good in the workplace for employees and in society are synergistic and not mutually exclusive. The Egypt Entrepreneurship Summit (EES) in November in the city of Luxor, Egypt was another event that made it clear that the Entrepreneurship playbook used for so many years was being rewritten with input from a region (Egypt, Middle East and North Africa) with one of the fastest growing populations in the world.

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The world needs more empathy and ICSB is ringing the bells for action.



About ICSB Gazette:

The ICSB Gazette is a weekly edition of a key topic that ICSB will showcase. The content is varied from research, practice, policy, and education. The editor of the ICSB Gazette is Ms. Jordyn Murphy, ICSB Operational Manager. She will be soliciting ideas and articles from ICSB members world-wide.

ICSB Executive Director Comment:

This Gazette issue is part of the newly released 2019 MSME Global Report.

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Contribute:

Have a topic you would like to see or an article to share? Please submit for consideration to jordyn@icsb.org