

World Café Conversation/ 14:00 - 15:30/ 27 March 2012

HOW SCIENCE & BUSINESS CAN CREATE A MORE SUSTAINABLE WORLD together



FINDING COMMON GROUND & RICHNESS IN DIVERSITY

This is a conversation that could take us places. What does science need to do & what does business need to do create a more sustainable world? The results from this conversation go forward to New York in October.

Business and science working together -- an important theme running throughout this conference. **Katherine Richardson**, Leader of the Sustainability Science Centre and Professor in Biological Oceanography, University of Copenhagen and **Dirk Olin**, Corporate Responsibility Officer's Association (CROA) Board Member and Editor-in-Chief, CR Magazine, opened the session.

Dirk spoke about the oxymoron many people think of when they think "corporate social responsibility". He gave some examples of how a focus on "corporate" can also lead to social responsibility. For example, UPS drivers don't make left turns anymore, not because they save money by reducing idling time, but because 87% of accidents occur on lefthand turns. By measuring safety and health data, the company made a significant change in employee behaviour with a positive social responsibility result.

Katherine presented the paradigm shift that is occurring within multi-national companies she works with at the Sustainability Science Centre. Many companies, especially those who have created a long-term vision, realise that they need help in deciding on making good investments based on science. They are aware that lack of resources will affect their ability to compete and science can inform a more complete picture of the

current landscape. The Sustainability Science Centre at the University of Copenhagen is well-positioned to be a strategic partner for businesses.

She sees the societal challenge is moving to competing on natural resources. "We might not use more money than we need to, but we do use more resources than we need to. The revolution will come through someone seeing the opportunities or demands the future will give and taking advantage of them. We must find ways to use our resources more effectively than we do today -- we need both business and science to take up their responsibilities: private enterprise is the locomotive, science needs to give direction, politics has the responsibility to make the economic frameworks we need. We are here to talk about making bridges, and successful bridges transport traffic in two directions."

What's the common ground that lies between us -- where can we work together to get more out of this? What is the contribution of science and what is the contribution of business? What do you have to share that might help us go further together? Sixty people began to consider the Café question:

What are the respective roles of science and business in the sustainability agenda? What would facilitate a useful exchange?



The partnering of business and science began already in the lead-up to this session, with Corporate Responsibility Magazine's Editor-in-Chief working closely with a top scientist based at the University of Copenhagen. Their conversation was rich, stimulating and very provocative.

What would it take to create enough trust for us to move forward together?

During the first round of conversation, table groups talked for 20 minutes and were then invited to speak into the room something that had stood out for them within their group – a flavour of what had been spoken. These are the themes that came up:

- We talked about a cross-cultural investigation into the interface of business and science. For example, in many places the science and business communities seem to be completely separate and there seems to be a fear among scientists to engage with the business community.
- This table had huge diversity in terms of age and occupation, we spoke of the role of science in providing scenarios for the future. For example, a region in Australia isn't producing enough food to be sustainable locally. Through analysis, it was discovered that primarily calories from sugar were being produced. If they were going to cope with the growing population they would have to completely change the nature of the agriculture in favor of food production.
- Large companies like McDonalds are coming under pressure to change their packaging. In Pakistan that doesn't happen at all as they're not yet focused on sustainability - they're only focused on profit. In other places like Davos in Switzerland, CSR is on the agenda because business knows it has no hiding place.
- Science is there to develop systems and technology to make life comfortable for people. Social science is there to dig deeper into the system that we make up as human beings. Business is there to develop deliberate mechanisms to propel these technologies into the community.
- A metaphor from Dr. Allan Knight talking to senior businesses: Imagine the globe as a business with 9 billion customers or employees. How would you run that business? This is an interesting chance to explore that.
- We feel business provides a form of funding, science a form of methodology. Of course they play other roles than just that, but there is a danger in rationalising the direction of science according to business.

Another lively round of conversation followed with people moving to a different table and speaking with a new group of people for 20 minutes. A further question invited people to explore what science and business could do respectively to build better bridges with each other. These were the collective ideas that came forward. They were clustered into groups - the **green** ideas listed here were for what science could do and those in **black** for what business could do.

Communicate

- Science must communicate their findings more clearly
- Science must translate evidence for business community and needs
- Have more and longer World Cafés
- Listen to business more and reflect on what they say
- Communicate to more audiences
- Listen to others
- "Stop, Collaborate & Listen" - inspired by Vanilla Ice and from both the business and academic viewpoint present at the table
- Communicate in the language of your cross-sector partners and find common goals that build trust
- Reduce sector prejudice, start genuine communication EARLY in the process

Understanding the Business Agenda

- Scientists have to understand the business agenda
- Deliver practical applications and show long-term advantage
- Help business reduce risk
- Support business with good evidence -- Recognise business research
- Translate evidence and facts into business needs
- Provide knowledge towards solutions

Building more trust

- Multi-disciplinary teams - TRUST
- Civil society can act as a third party/ mediator as it's not just a one-way 'bridging' role
- Trust business and science sectors more
- Don't fear attack
- Facilitate & speed up the process of: contract - cooperation - collaboration - partnership - co-generation of knowledge. How to get more overlap, frame together, and increase the trust and engagement to increase the knowledge and understanding
- Producing the science that can reduce the risk for businesses

Developing a Common Language / Practice

- Facilitate / be more open to new forms of cooperation with science and society
- Communicate in the language of your partner
- Ensure enough time to talk
- Moving from CSR agenda to mainstream business agenda with greater transparency and longevity

Funding & Incentives

- Take societal responsibility. Clearly define what is needed from science. Listen to science & trust science
- Business must provide more incentives to innovators and scientists
- Provide funding & expand timescales - today it's a big pot of money, in the future it can be many little pots
- "Show me the money!"

WORLD CAFÉ



It's all about conversation...

- World Café is a method for fostering interaction & dialogue with both large and small groups.
- It's effective in surfacing the collective wisdom of large groups of diverse people around questions that matter in real life situations.
- It helps a community to surface and deepen its conversation to action.

More: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>

VALUING EACH OTHER MORE...

If Science can help set the direction, then Business is the locomotive. How can these two support each other for best results?

- New Funding schemes focusing on integration of research and business
- Change the reward system

Shaping the Field Together

- Value science more -- Ethical perspective in addition to bottom line -- Seek and share evidence for business decisions -- Fund research (useful)
- Business needs to have a longer term view and value system
- Need forecast -- Do, ask and listen to science -- Action-change business model
- Business can organise *parts of* scientific work
- Three levels of action: need, do, action - need to have a forecast - ask science & listen...move into action - changes business models together with science
- Business can help organise but "should not silently take over the science community"
- A business should value science more and take an ethical perspective in addition to pursuing the bottomline. Business is doing more than many people think, to become more environmentally & socially sensitive

Reflecting on this harvest we saw that there was much concern for the need for better listening and understanding of the other. The harvesting team noticed: "Great listening seems to have disappeared in some places around the world. Why do we continue to believe that everyone needs incentives to do the right thing, rather than having a compelling focus at the centre of what we do? It hints at something interesting in the stories we are telling each other."

Some questions were formed by the harvesting team, listening to the responses from the group:

- What is the language of partnership to take this forward?

- What would it take to build enough trust to move forward together?
- What does it take to see ourselves as co-creators/on the same team?
- What would happen if we focused on how we can help each other and humanity (if we put something else at the centre, what happens)?
- What does it take to create both beautiful and practical solutions (simplicity shows us the way)?

And finally, someone contributed the question: "How does competition fit into all of this?"

Dirk thanked people for coming and participating in the session, he noted that it was a rich conversation that had shed more light than heat. He had noticed the sound that had been created in the room, more of a symphony than merely an exchange of notes, we had created a new language today. He invited everyone to the NYSE forum in New York on the 2nd and 3rd of October 2012 and asked people to leave their business cards so he could keep in contact with us all.

Questions posted around the room that framed some of our initial planning for this session:

1. Are the sum total of activities of the sustainability movement, moving the needle on natural sustainability or merely scratching the surface?
2. Why should companies ask their suppliers to publicly report on sustainability? And why is it important that companies follow frameworks such as the GRI or DJSI or Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)?
3. How sustainable is the sustainability movement?
4. Are our natural ecosystems adapting or collapsing? How do we know?
5. What is the magnitude of adjustment of activity required to restore sustainability and resilience to natural resources and what would be some of the consequences of that adjustment?



What would a great partnership look like?

Bridges to the Future

How would you make use of the intellectual power of 2500+ of the world's leading experts on global change, sustainability, development and resilience?

Amidst the traditional conference keynote addresses and breakout sessions, we piloted interactive sessions designed to provoke dialogue between business, policy and science and generate novel solutions to pressing problems. But we must also develop fresh perspectives on how social sciences and natural sciences interact. These participatory sessions

are called **Bridges to the Future**. In comparison to a scientific presentation, these sessions happened in conversation and were recorded in that way.

Programme Development

- Reed Evans/reed.evans@igbp.kva.se

Facilitation Team

- Mary Alice Arthur/www.getsoaring.com
- Linda Mitchell/www.lindajoymitchell.org.uk

- James Ede/littlegreenmushroom@gmail.com
- Liane Fredricks/www.lianefredricks.com
- Cindy Sundborg/cindysundborg@gmail.com

For more about participatory process and the Art of Hosting practice: www.artofhosting.org

