

Responsible Supply Chains in Polycrisis: Resilience, Rights, and the Role of Business Schools

PRME Working Group on Responsible Supply Chain Webinar

The PRME Working Group on Responsible Supply Chain recently convened an international webinar titled "**Responsible Supply Chains in Polycrisis: Resilience, Rights, and the Role of Business Schools.**" The session brought together scholars, educators, industry practitioners, and sustainability advocates to examine one of the most pressing challenges of our time: how to design, govern, and teach responsible supply chains in an era of interconnected global crises.

The webinar was moderated by **Dr. Sunita Rani**, Associate Professor at Woxsen University and Co-Chair of the PRME Working Group on Responsible Supply Chain. The discussion explored how business schools can prepare future leaders to navigate a world characterized by climate volatility, geopolitical uncertainty, human rights challenges, and growing regulatory expectations.

Understanding Supply Chains in an Era of Polycrisis

The webinar began with the recognition that supply chains today operate in an environment increasingly shaped by "polycrisis"—the convergence of multiple interconnected disruptions that reinforce and amplify one another. Climate-related disasters, geopolitical fragmentation, resource scarcity, labor exploitation concerns, and regulatory developments are no longer isolated risks but interconnected realities influencing business decisions worldwide.

In her keynote address, **Professor Donna Marshall (University College Dublin, Ireland)** challenged conventional approaches to supply chain management that prioritize efficiency and cost reduction above all else. She argued that future supply chains must be designed not only for resilience but also for justice, sustainability, and long-term societal wellbeing. Her presentation encouraged participants to reconsider whether traditional growth-driven models are sufficient for addressing today's complex global challenges.

Resilience and Human Rights: A Necessary Balance

One of the central themes of the webinar was the tension between supply chain resilience and human rights protection. As organizations respond to disruptions through reshoring, nearshoring, supplier consolidation, and inventory expansion, important questions emerge regarding who bears the social costs of these strategies.

Mr. Dhananjay Krishna from Coromandel International shared practical insights from the corporate sourcing perspective, highlighting the challenges organizations face when balancing cost efficiency, business continuity, and ethical sourcing commitments.

Dr. Arshia Kaul of Central Queensland University, Australia, offered an international and youth-centered perspective, emphasizing that resilience strategies can sometimes shift burdens onto vulnerable workers and communities. Her contribution highlighted the importance of making invisible

supply chain impacts visible within management education and encouraging students to evaluate business decisions through a broader social lens.

The discussion reinforced that responsible supply chain management requires leaders capable of understanding both operational performance and human consequences.

Reimagining Supply Chain Education

A major focus of the webinar was the role of business schools in preparing future managers and decision-makers.

Dr. Syed Hassan Jafar, Vice-Dean at Woxsen University, discussed curriculum gaps in responsible supply chain education and highlighted opportunities for strengthening sustainability, ethics, and human rights content across management programs.

Dr. Sujit Singh, Associate Professor of Operations and Supply Chain Management at Woxsen University, explored innovative pedagogical approaches including simulations, experiential learning, case-based teaching, and interdisciplinary learning models. Participants discussed how traditional teaching methods often fail to capture the complexity of modern supply chain challenges and how immersive learning experiences can better prepare students for real-world decision-making.

The webinar emphasized that responsible supply chain management should not be treated as a niche elective but integrated across core business disciplines, including operations, finance, strategy, procurement, and leadership.

Regulatory Developments and Emerging Responsibilities

Participants also examined the growing influence of regulations such as the European Union Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D), Germany's Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (LkSG), and the United States Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA).

These developments are transforming expectations for supply chain transparency, accountability, and human rights due diligence. The discussion highlighted the need for business schools to equip students with the knowledge and skills required to navigate this rapidly evolving regulatory environment.

Rather than viewing compliance as a purely legal requirement, speakers encouraged educators to frame due diligence as a broader responsibility linked to ethical leadership, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable value creation.

Building a Collaborative Future

Interactive polling and participant discussions revealed strong interest in developing new teaching resources, case studies, and collaborative initiatives through the PRME Working Group. Several priority areas emerged, including deep-tier supply chain visibility, human rights due diligence, climate-supply chain integration, decolonizing supply chain education, and responsible supplier partnerships.

The session concluded with a call to action for educators, researchers, and practitioners to work collectively in developing innovative teaching materials and sharing best practices that reflect the realities of contemporary supply chains.

As global challenges continue to evolve, business schools have a critical responsibility not only to teach students how to manage supply chains efficiently, but also how to transform them into systems that promote resilience, equity, sustainability, and long-term shared prosperity.

Webinar Recording

The webinar recording is now available online and can be accessed here:

<https://youtu.be/0UXGMFoJRc4?si=YPbR7bwCTMcFuXDQ>

The PRME Working Group on Responsible Supply Chain invites educators, researchers, students, and practitioners to view the recording and join the ongoing conversation on advancing responsible management education and sustainable supply chain practices worldwide.