



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS



UN PRME Report 2022



PRME Principles for Responsible
Management Education

an initiative of the 

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Message from the President and Vice-Chancellor	5
Message from the Dean of the School of Business	6
About the School of Business (ULSB)	8
PRME in Context	10
ULSB Sustainability	11
Leicester Innovation Hub and Social Impact Team	14
Part I: Fulfilment of Past UN PRME Commitments	16
Gender Equality Commitment	17
Testimonial – Women Leading with Purpose	18
Decent Work and Economic Growth and Industry and Innovation Infrastructure Commitments	19
Sustainable Cities and Communities Commitment	21
Climate Action Commitment	24
Part II: Case studies on research, teaching and engagement with stakeholders	26
Cultural Diversity and Inclusion in the Marketplace	27
Leicester University of Sanctuary project	28
Ecological Embeddedness of Businesses	29
Risk Crisis and Disaster Management	30
Testimonial – Commonwealth Scholarship	31
The GRADE Project	32
Difficult Conversations	34
Sustainability Oriented Supply chain	35
Dis-/Mis-information on COVID-19 in Malawi	36
Sustainable tourism in emerging destinations during the COVID-19 pandemic	38
Business Ethics and the UNGC	40
Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum	41
Black Excellence Symposium	42
Experiences of minority ethnic students at the University of Leicester	44
Mompreneurs’ wellbeing	46
ULSB Virtual Career Development Exhibition	47
Leicester Masterclass 2022	49
Homeworking and Wellbeing in the COVID-19 pandemic	50
Sharing and Rental Economy Assessment	51
Bridging the Digital Gender Divide	52
The Future Success Programme	53
Understanding minimalism consumption and social inequality	54
Learning from Takeo Province’s Disaster Management	55
Investigating international trade and forced labour	57
Supporting UK SMEs sustainability and resilience post pandemic	58
Examining inequality in the UK business landscape	59
Part III: Future UN PRME Commitments	60
Gender Equality	61
Reducing Inequalities	61
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	61
Good Health and Wellbeing	62
Climate Action	62
Decent Work and Economic Growth and Industry and Innovation Infrastructure	62
Quality Education	63

Executive Summary



This sixth Sharing Information of Progress (SIP) report reconfirms the University of Leicester School of Business’ (ULSB) commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management and showcases the work done by ULSB staff and students to embed the UN Global Compact in their research, teaching, operations and engagement activities.

The report covers the period 2020-2022 and includes letters of support from the University of Leicester President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nishan Canagarajah, the ULSB Dean, Professor Daniel Ladley and the ULSB Sustainability Lead, Dr Cristina Fona. Part I provides a clear account of the progress made since the last SIP report on the UN PRME commitments taken by the School in 2020 on gender equality, decent work and economic growth, industry and innovation infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities and climate action. Part II, instead, offers an overview of the outstanding work done by the ULSB community in the areas of research, teaching and learning, and engagement with stakeholders in line with the seven responsible management principles (Purpose, Values, Method, Research, Partnerships, Dialogue and Organisational Practices) and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The report ends with an outline of ULSB future commitments to responsible management education.

Report prepared by

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Introduction



As a University founded on hope in the wake of the First World War, our commitment to inclusion, social justice and equality is unwavering. Our mission is to use the power of higher education to improve lives.

Professor Nishan Canagarajah, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester

Message from the President and Vice-Chancellor

The University of Leicester enters its second century with a renewed commitment to change the world for the better. As a University founded on hope in the wake of the First World War, our commitment to inclusion, social justice and equality is unwavering. Our mission is to use the power of higher education to improve lives.

This is set out in our **10-year strategy** which provides a roadmap for making an impact that matters to the world. In fact, we describe our community of staff, students, alumni and supporters as Citizens of Change – empowered to effect positive change in society.

We are a university driven by our values: Inclusive, Inspiring and Impactful. We are collaborative in our approach and we forge purposeful partnerships. In this respect, we forged an historic agreement between universities and councils across Leicestershire to work together to drive economic growth and tackle social challenges across the region.

In working with local authorities across the region in this way, the partnership is a collaborative approach which will help direct work carried out into projects which will provide the most benefit to the area. We are working with our neighbouring universities to pool expertise and resources to deliver support for local organisations in their **net zero journeys** and other climate challenges, whilst our award-winning **Innovation for Good programme** trains students to work with local SMEs to measure their contribution to the UN SDGs.

Mapping the University’s contribution to the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** illustrates a strong pedigree of climate change research and teaching at Leicester. We have an ambitious net zero plus plan as part of our Climate Change Strategy, and we ensure our environmental operations and practices are informed by our own academic expertise and encourage colleagues and students to innovate solutions in their areas – resulting in the University being well regarded in the sustainability sector.

We contribute actively to broader UN goals and issues as a UN Global Compact participant and as one of the first UK university signatories of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Accord. We have already moved to a position where we have no direct investments in carbon/fossil fuels. 100% of our undergraduate courses (since 2020/21 entry) have teaching aligned to the SDGs and we guide all prospective students with information to become socially responsible, global Citizens of Change.

- Our impact is diverse and encompasses cultural, medical, heritage and other benefits, and we are proud of how the University adds value to the region in economic terms.
- We are a £330 million annual turnover business with more than 3,000 staff and 19,500 students.
 - The University is worth £600 million to the UK economy each year and add to this £100 million contributions from our student economy.
 - Each year we contribute £360 million to the economies of Leicester and Leicestershire.
 - We spend more than £10 million annually with local businesses in the city.
 - And we support one in every 23 jobs in Leicester, a further 7,000 across the county, and 10,000 in total across the UK.

The ecosystem created by the **School of Business**, our **Innovation Hub** and **Space Park Leicester**, working together with partners and regional stakeholders, supports research, innovation and transformative impact. As a university, our mission is education, using our powerhouse of knowledge for the good of the nation.

During our **Centenary Year**, we planted trees, provided scholarships, held over 70 events and engaged with diverse communities. We continue to draw strength from our rich heritage and deep roots as we enter this, our second century, with assurance that we will not only keep alive, but build upon, our founding legacy.

Professor Nishan Canagarajah
President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester

Each year we contribute £360 million to the economy of Leicester and Leicestershire.

Message from the Dean of the School of Business

The University of Leicester School of Business brings together academics across the full range of business disciplines including accounting, economics, entrepreneurship, finance, human resources, innovation, international business, management, marketing, operations and strategy. We are a relatively new School coming out of the merger of the previous Department of Economics and School of Management. The latter of these had been a UN PRME member prior to the merger and the merged School has retained this as an important part of our ethos.

I took over as Dean of the School in November 2021. My goal is to develop an inclusive School for all of our students and staff in which world leading academic research and an excellent student experience are interlinked. We are currently developing a strategic plan for the next 5 years to achieve this. The strategy we develop will be fully aligned with the University strategy and Citizens of Change and will feature our commitment to UN PRME and the Sustainable Development Goals as I believe these are key drivers to what we want to achieve as a School. I'm particularly looking forward to embedding sustainability into our strategy. We have taken steps in this area in recent months, for instance, organising Carbon Literacy training for all members of the School Senior Management Team, however, I believe there is more we can do both in terms of our physical site and as people.

Whilst our strategy is not yet released, we have already taken action aligned with these goals. The establishment of a research cluster in Responsible Business will provide a home within the School for research aligned with UN sustainable development goals. We have already hired exciting academics who work in this area and have plans to hire more in the near future. More broadly across the School we have many academics doing work that relates to the goals and with the significant growth we have recently seen, I expect many more staff to join and contribute to this effort in the coming months.

My goal is to develop an inclusive School for all of our students and staff in which world leading academic research and an excellent student experience are interlinked.

Professor Daniel Ladley
Dean of the University of Leicester School of Business

In recent months the School EDI committee has gained a new chair and had its mandate refreshed to coordinate EDI activity across the School and ensure that these vital issues are brought to the fore in School discussions. An important part of the committee going forward will be that it incorporates both staff and students, building the School community. We recently submitted our application for Athena Swan Bronze award, recognising our commitment to gender equality. Whilst this award is important, the crucial part of this process was identifying areas we could improve and steps we could take to make the School more equal and inclusive.

We are committed to improving business and opportunity in the local area. A key way we have contributed to this is through the Help to Grow programme in which we have provided leadership and training to small and medium size business leaders to help them develop their businesses and enhance the local economy. Our new strategic partnership with the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce further reinforces our intentions in this area.

I look forward to both broadening and deepening our commitment to UN PRME in the coming years.

Professor Daniel Ladley
Dean of the University of Leicester School of Business



PROFESSOR DANIEL LADLEY

About the School of Business (ULSB)



The University of Leicester School of Business has a long and distinguished history.

The University was originally conceived and developed by prominent civic leaders and business proprietors in the local community to respond to the devastation from the 1914-1918 war. The idea for a University College was initiated by Reverend Joseph Wood of the Literary and Philosophical Society and funded by a large number of kind donations from private benefactors. One of these benefactors was Thomas Fielding Johnson (1828-1921) a prominent Victorian businessman and philanthropist.

Thomas Fielding Johnson was a generous, successful and eminent entrepreneur whose magnificent home befitted his stature and that of his family. Through his work and philanthropic activities, he married town and gown – he was granted the Honorary Freedom of the City of Leicester and the land the University sits upon was bequeathed by him.

Through his life and endeavours he epitomised not just commercial success but what being a Citizen of Change means. He made an enormously positive difference on the city.

In 2021, we formally opened the new home of the School of Business at Brookfield, the former home of Thomas Fielding Johnson. This building itself was one of the most impressive residences in Leicester and is a magnificent addition to the University estate. Purchased in 2013, it has undergone a £15.8m refurbishment to create state-of-the-art learning and teaching spaces including a Harvard-style lecture theatre, the ULSB Trading Room with 16 dual-screen Bloomberg terminals plus a wealth of space for our students with the aim of creating an outstanding environment for them, our staff and the local community.

The School of Business itself builds on 100 years of delivering business education, and we are internationally renowned for our courses in accounting and finance, business and management, marketing and economics. The pioneering work we conduct in partnership with leaders, managers and organisations to promote responsible business practice means we are ranked in the top 15 in the UK for research power.



PRME in Context

This UN PRME report covers a period characterised by intense change as business schools faced long-term social and economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, keeping a clear focus on the UN PRME goals has been increasingly difficult and yet more important than ever. Reflecting on the ULSB 10 year-long commitment to UN PRME, we are still driven by the same willingness to make a distinct and positive contribution to the society through our research, teaching and engagement activities. In the past two years, we have paid special attention to the issues that have emerged at a more local level with initiatives such as Help to Grow, the Race to Zero Carbon Accelerator and the Innovation for Good Programme, but we have never ceased to make a tangible impact on issues on a global scale and projects like GRADE and the Avoidable Deaths Network are clear evidence of this.

As we review our latest achievements, we are proud of the efforts that our ULSB community has made in order to promote inclusive and equitable quality education and life learning opportunities with fourteen programmes and more than sixty modules integrating the UN SDGs in intended learning outcomes and assessments. We also recognise the efforts of ULSB colleagues who have worked alongside partners to help local businesses innovate and build their resilience throughout the pandemic, despite the enormous amount of stress and pressure. They have all worked relentlessly to support the sustainability and wellbeing of our communities, whilst ensuring to equip future leaders with the skills needed to drive change thanks to projects like the online sustainability challenge and the carbon literacy training.

Our current activities, which are presented in the second part of the report, exemplify the extent of our contribution to the UN Global Compact with research on issues such as the digital divide, homeworking and wellbeing, corporate and place sustainability and diversity and inclusion in the marketplace, tackling more than twelve of the UN SDGs. This also includes the amazing work of some of our doctoral students on sustainable tourism, disaster management and sustainable development and mompreneurs' wellbeing. The report also highlights the results of our pledge to improve teaching methods and practices in line with values of global social responsibility – UN SDGs 4, 5 and 10 - through innovative approaches, new modules and state-of-the-art research. Two of the latest projects that will inform our future strategies include a study on the experiences of minority ethnic students (EMES) in the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities at the University of Leicester and wider research on embedding sustainability in the marketing curriculum.



DR CRISTINA FONA

While we reflect on the effects of the pandemic, still impacting a large proportion of businesses and individuals, we cannot disregard the fact that the world is grappling with other serious threats from climate change to the Ukrainian war and subsequent political and economic instability. At these times, it is paramount for universities and business schools to step forward and is with this in mind that we have set our commitments for the next years. These are outlined at the end of the SIP document and focus on issues concerning peace and justice, wellbeing, climate change, quality education, equality, and economic growth.

While signing these commitments, we hope that this report will serve as a compass guiding our work in the coming months, but also as a recognition of all those contributing to UN PRME and the sustainable future we all endeavour as Citizens of Change.

Dr Cristina Fona
ULSB Sustainability Lead



ULSB Sustainability

Strategy

The UN Global Compact allows for a holistic approach to sustainability, incorporating environmental, social and economic elements to foster growth and innovation. The University of Leicester School of Business in collaboration with the University of Leicester Social Impact Team and the Leicester Innovation Hub, utilises the UN SDGs as a framework enabling businesses to gain a deeper insight into value generation through business process improvements and being innovative in the development of business models.

The recent **University Civic Agreement** - signed by the University of Leicester, together with De Montfort University, Loughborough University and the city and counties of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland - reconfirms this commitment to work together to drive economic growth and tackle social challenges across the region. There are four key areas that have been identified as part of the **Universities Partnership** : arts, culture and heritage; the economy; education; health and wellbeing and environmental sustainability. Central to this strategy is our mission as a School and University to educate and inspire students, the community and policy makers in driving change and impact. This means supporting businesses to incorporate sustainability and social impact when innovating their processes, new products and services, whilst allowing our students to gain invaluable experience to take forward into their lives.



Teaching and Learning

Our efforts in delivering sustainable and responsible management education have continued over the past two years. Our most recent audit, carried out in 2021-22, proudly shows that our teaching is aligned to 16 out of 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This means that 67 of our modules at undergraduate level have learning outcomes covering one or more of the SDGs (See table 1). The top three SDGs embedded within intended learning outcomes at School level include: SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth - with more than 1000 students learning about inclusive and sustainable economic growth; SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities - reaching 1019 students and Goals 9, 12, 16 & 17 each reaching 805 students. Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals - is particularly important and stands at the heart of ULSB’s modus operandi as it is only through strong partnerships with institutions, businesses and the wider community that the UN shared goals can be achieved.



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES




















17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Top three SDGs embedded within intended learning outcomes at School level

Sustainable learning and teaching at the University of Leicester goes beyond classrooms and lecture theatres and towards more direct engagement with transformational projects. An example of these efforts is the Innovation for Good programme, overseen by the University’s Social Impact Team and Leicester Innovation Hub, which aims to train students to conduct environmental sustainability audits.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY ONE OR MORE SDG.

	1140
	1019
	805
	805
	805
	805
	608
	457
	457
	394
	394
	394
	394
	394
	369
	335
	277

Leicester Innovation Hub and Social Impact Team

The Innovation for Good Programme

The Innovation for Good Programme is in its 5th year of delivery and continues to be award winning: AUDE winner (2019) & Green Gown Award finalist (2019 & 2022). Together, the Leicester Innovation Hub and Social Impact Team have further strengthened the programme through partnership with East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, within the East Midlands Accelerator: winning over £1M (UK Government Community Renewal Fund) for investment in the region for growth, including zero carbon. This partnership has been further enhanced through the Leicester Innovation Accelerator, expanding the Innovation for Good programme by sharing resources and knowledge with partners De Montfort University and Loughborough University: training over 120 students, providing paid work experience and skills development and, enabling greater reach to a wider network of regional businesses. To note, the expansion of delivery has been due to the Innovation Hub’s approach to working together with both partners and networks to mobilise our sustainability expertise, making short and tight funding deadlines possible.

With over 100 students trained to deliver audits since 2019, the initiative ensures that students carry forward the skills necessary to be Citizens of Change now and in their future lives and careers. Impact for both the students and businesses is the driving force for our continued commitment and there are many examples that demonstrate how our students have been able to grow, flourish and gain meaningful opportunities. With many businesses benefiting from reducing their carbon footprint, ability to achieve ‘net zero’, reduction of raw materials used and creating ethical supply chains.

“The audits are a fun way to gain useful skills and I became more aware of my opportunities after graduation. Thanks to being experienced in conducting audits I got an internship with WYG Leicester.”

Ola Dalek, second year undergraduate student

Students’ engagement

Through taking part in the programme, many students have shared feedback of their increased capability and confidence when applying for internships, placements and graduate roles. They have often quoted that taking part has helped them in gaining ‘real-world’ experience, where they can ‘test drive’ their skills, whilst gaining professional awareness in business settings. Real opportunities for students have been generated, where programme experience and skills in a business have led to employment and developing careers in sustainability.

“Being an international student, I wanted to talk to more people and be comfortable with the language. Through the audits, I got a great deal of exposure and was able to communicate with many different people. The audits help me hone many transferrable skills such as communication, teamwork and strategic thinking and now I have examples to answer competency questions in interviews”

Shruti Ramachandran, MSc student



How Bad are Bananas? on display at ULSB

Businesses’ engagement

Examples of businesses that have benefitted from our support are Green Tomato and Structural Adhesives. Green Tomato had a number of goals and challenges they wanted support with, and both the Leicester Innovation Hub and School of Business were able to help through a range of programmes. The founder took part in the Help to Grow programme gaining time, space, an expanded network and further developing skills to grow their business. Furthermore, Green Tomato was able to access funded Carbon Literacy Training and student placement resource through the Race to Zero Carbon Accelerator.

Structural Adhesives are seeking advice on reducing energy usage in order to save money and possibly increase profitability. Through the Leicester Innovation Hub support, carbon reduction is now a high priority, with efforts made to source materials as locally as possible, as well as formulating new products with reduced amounts of raw materials. As Structural Adhesives is a diverse and female led company, they are seeking to improve their social impact by promoting and championing STEM wherever possible.

Innovation Friday

In addition to the programmes outlined above, the Social Impact Team, together with ULSB, engage businesses through a series of events hosted at the Innovation Hub on the last Friday of each month.

Called ‘Innovation Friday’, these events provide an opportunity for businesses and academics to discuss economic and social challenges. For instance, in March 2021, the event themed ‘Our Resilient Future’, saw businesses and academics come together to discuss how building a resilient business can boost the triple bottom line. The theme for the event in September 2021 was ‘Act Now: Is not being green hurting your business?’ with three sessions on types of green innovation and guest speakers from both academia and practice. As part of the sessions, Emma Fieldhouse, founder of Future We Want, and winner of the Innovate UK Women in Innovation award 2020/21, was able to share her experience of being a responsible and proactive innovating business. The ‘How Bad are Bananas?’ game developed by the business was showcased as part of the event held at the School of Business. The game is an innovative climate conversation tool to help individuals from Higher Education to large corporates learn about how individual decision-making can positively impact climate action.

By building on this experience, our School together with the Social Impact Team and the Leicester Innovation Hub looks forward to building on recent successes and furthering the ambitions and commitments around environmental sustainability and the sustainable development goals.

Part I: Fulfilment of Past UN PRME Commitments



'Finding the Synergies', International Womens Day 2022

Gender Equality Commitment

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at ULSB

The University of Leicester School of Business is committed to building an environment of equality, diversity and inclusion for all students and staff, regardless of personal and group characteristics and their intersections. Over the last two years, the School has continued to take action to increase the experience of underrepresented staff and student groups within the School.

Specifically, in line with the commitments set out in the previous UN PRME report, the School has submitted the Athena Swan application for the bronze award, which sets up an action plan to promote gender equality by fostering women leadership skills and advancing their career opportunities. Furthermore, the School has supported the participation of four members of staff in the Women Leading with Purpose programme ran by the University and promoted the development of two outreach groups: the Women Economics, Finance and Accounting group (WEFA) and the Women's Inspiration Network (WIN).



Established by members of ULSB staff as a project as part of the Women Leading with Purpose programme, WIN is a network that connects women in all roles and teams across the School and the University, creating a space to share ideas, provide support, collaborate and develop leadership skills. The network organises two major events per year and runs a randomised coffee trialscheme, the WIN Café, with one-on-one informal chats for 30 minutes with a new person once per month.

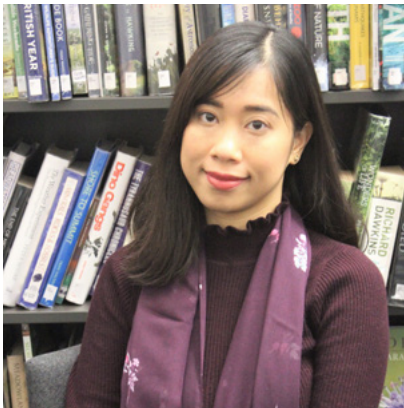
In one of the latest events organised by WIN and the ULSB Black Excellence (UBE) group for International Women's Day, 'Finding the Synergies', students had the opportunity to meet with Leila Thomas, CEO of Urban Synergy, and discuss the experiences and challenges of entrepreneurial Black women in the UK.

The second outreach group, WEFA aims at encouraging students, especially girls, to consider choosing economics, finance and accounting for their A-level and university studies, to increase diversity in EFA. The group shares stories from women in EFA and runs outreach events to get more young women into the field. In 2021 WEFA held two in-person outreach events at the University of Leicester, in collaboration with Discover Economics.

More information about WEFA can be found on their [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) accounts.

The School has also recently established an EDI Committee, uniting students, professional service colleagues and academics from all departments, who meet bimonthly to promote, celebrate, and raise awareness of EDI issues, including gender equality and reduced inequalities. In addition to Women in Finance and the Women's Inspiration Network, the committee also helps to promote the activities of the ULSB Black Excellence group which is actively involved in organising lectures, workshops and networking events, tackling questions on equal access and opportunities for Black students. More on UBE and the Black Excellence Symposium at page 42 of this report.

Testimonial – Women Leading with Purpose



Dr Linh X.D. Nguyen
Lecturer in Finance

I am glad to have had the opportunity to participate in Women Leading with Purpose (WLP), a programme that provides leadership training to women who work at the University of Leicester. The programme has been such an inspiration for me, providing me with important skills to develop myself as a leader. During different modules of the programme, we gained awareness of the diversity in leadership and discovered our own leadership style. We identified our values, developed our own leadership journey based on our own preferences, and understood the importance of respecting other leadership styles.

The programme has strengthened my network within the university. It has allowed me to meet inspirational women, both academic and professional colleagues, working in different departments of the University. We shared our stories in life and career development. We learnt from others' experience and discussed how to overcome challenges and become our own better versions.

Upon the completion of the programme, our team launched the Women's Inspiration Network (WIN), a project to support and empower women at the University of Leicester. WIN is a network that aims to provide advice and support, promote collaboration and develop leadership skills. As part of WIN, we designed the WIN café, monthly one-to-one meetings between women in different departments of the university. We also organised online and face-to-face events to motivate and inspire women in life and career development.

As the co-founder and leader of WIN, I am proud to see the development of myself as well as other "WINners" in the leadership journey. Although most of the meetings were online due to the pandemic, we managed to maintain and expand our network, organise successful events, provide support and advice to women across the university. I can confidently say that the Women Leading with Purpose programme has inspired and motivated me to continuously develop myself. I appreciate the opportunity I had to participate in the programme and would highly recommend WLP to women in the University for leadership development.



Help to Grow: Management
Module Workshop

Decent Work and Economic Growth and Industry and Innovation Infrastructure Commitments

Help to Grow

Help to Grow is a 90% government-funded programme, delivered by the University of Leicester School of Business as a Small Business Charter accredited business school. In line with our 2020 UN PRME pledge to enable innovation projects with businesses in the region, this programme supports SME development and business leader education, with a particular focus on innovation, productivity and building resilience. Since September 2021, the School of Business has delivered seven Help to Grow intakes, with 154 SMEs across the East Midlands and East of England joining the programme. We plan to deliver a further 10 cohorts per year over the next three years.

The course is completed over 12 weeks on a part-time basis and is delivered flexibly, with a mix of online and face-to-face elements. These include eight online webinars, four face-to-face case study sessions, eight online peer group calls and 10 hours of confidential 1-1 mentoring, leading to the creation of a business growth action plan.

The programme provides 12 modules covering the following key topics:

Strategy and Innovation	Developing a Marketing Strategy	High Performance Workplace
Digital Adoption	Building a Brand	Efficient Operations
Internationalisation and Winning New Markets	Organisational Design	Finance and Financial Management
Vision, Mission and Values	Employee Engagement and Leading Change	Implementing Growth Action Plans

The programme also embeds three key themes spanning across the 12 modules:

Responsible business: Using sustainability and responsible leadership as drivers for identifying opportunities, solving problems, strengthening branding and engaging employees and identifying carbon reduction strategies relevant to SMEs.

Equality, diversity and inclusion: Developing an inclusive culture of innovation that embraces diversity, ideas and problem-solving across teams, customers and suppliers

Productivity: Exploring the links between productivity and innovation, systems, processes and resources. Developing employee skills and engagement and leadership and management attributes within a high-performance workplace with great customer relations.

An example of how these themes are integrated is module 5 of the programme which focuses on marketing in the context of the Triple Bottom Line framework. Participants are involved in both understanding this concept and relating it back to the specifics within their business to identify practical scope for improvement.

Similarly, for modules 7-9 the overarching theme is 'Building a Sustainable Business' with this focusing on: "The ability and capacity in your business to implement change will determine how successfully it can adapt, exploit new knowledge, and deliver new strategies.

For the business leader, understanding how to create the conditions that will allow individuals and teams to develop and thrive, especially through periods of change, is crucial. In this part of the curriculum, you will review your organisational structures, leadership approach and management practices and plan how you can adapt and develop to remain dynamic and competitive over time.”

Furthermore, given the importance of the transition to sustainability, module 8 of the programme covers sources of resistance to change both at an individual and organisational level, the role of leaders in managing change and models for delivering change effectively. This module also highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion in relation to innovation, employee engagement, a sense of belonging, staff recruitment and staff retention.

Course participants have highlighted that the opportunity to discuss the course content in depth with other business leaders and to network have been key benefits of the programme. Coupled with the Help to Grow UK-wide alumni network, this aspect provides considerable scope for different businesses to partner to work collaboratively around sustainable development.

Help to Grow is aimed at senior managers in SMEs with 5-249 employees in any sector that have been operational for at least one year. The SME pays £750 but the remaining 90% of the course cost is funded by government. This funded approach, combined with the flexibility of largely online delivery, provides high quality and accessible business education, embedding learning across many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Feedback from programme participants has been excellent and demonstrates that business schools can be impactful drivers of business development through their role in shaping the perspectives and enhancing the capabilities of business leaders. Since completing the course with the School of Business, Louise Cornell who runs a Norwich-based planning consultancy, **Collective Community Planning**, says:

“My focus is different. It’s now firmly on growing the business and I have a plan for that, whereas before it was more the business is growing, how do I cope with that? We have employed more people, including an apprentice, and we’re definitely more business-like, with clearer goals in terms of where the business will be in 6 months / 1 year etc. We also now make good use of digital tools, including MS 365, which has transformed the way we collaborate, both as a small team and with clients.”

Kimberly Kearns from Leicestershire-based **Sublime Science**, outlines that the range of sessions and opportunities to meet and learn from other business leaders were key benefits of the course:

“I joined the course to strengthen my skills in order to support the growth of the business. The variety of sessions from in-person workshops, to online peer group calls and 1 on 1 with a mentor meant that I could really engage in the programme. A highlight was meeting like-minded individuals from other local SMEs.”

Sue Keogh from marketing company **Sookio** explains how the course has transformed her business strategy:

“The course is so valuable for anyone with an established business who understands all the challenges of managing teams, premises, and the finances, and who wants a fresh perspective so they can develop their growth strategy. I’ve never had any formal business training, so learning about models and approaches was particularly useful. I had several penny-dropping moments in the peer sessions and the mentoring process helped me overhaul my business strategy completely.”

The Help to Grow programme is an accessible and impactful force for good in driving development, sustainability and building effective business communities. Further information including additional participant testimonials are available at www.le.ac.uk/helptogrow

Sustainable Cities and Communities Commitment

Disaster Risk Reduction and Reproductive Health in Bangladesh

Following the commitment taken in 2020 as part of the UN PRME report, Dr Nibedita S. Ray-Bennett has continued her research into disaster risk reduction and development at the interface with public health in Bangladesh.

Between 2015 and 2019 Dr Ray-Bennett developed and tested an evidence-based integrated intervention package called RHCC (pre-positioning UNFPA’s Reproductive Health (RH) Kit 8 prior to a flood; ensuring capacity building of health workers and promoting community awareness) in order to improve the quality and availability of post-abortion care (PAC) during a flood in the primary health care facilities in Belkuchi, Bangladesh.

Between 2019 and 2021 (funded by ESRC-Accelerator Fund and IPPF) Dr Ray-Bennett, in collaboration with the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Data Management Aid and the Directorate General of Family Planning and with funding from the International Planned Parenthood Federation - South Asia Region Office, identified gaps in existing RH Kits, as well as developed two low-budget emergency kits - Facility RH Kit and Crisis RH Kit - to overcome this gap.

Both RH Kits are designed for the management of post-abortion complications including incomplete, septic and spontaneous abortion during disasters and humanitarian crises, and can be positioned at primary as well as secondary health facility set-up, including emergency set-up (e.g. flood-cum-cyclone shelters, safe homes, and refugee camps or any temporary disaster camps). Details of the RH Kits can be found through this weblink: <https://www.ippfsar.org/resource/introducing-reproductive-health-kits-facility-crisis-set-bangladesh>

Dr Ray-Bennett developed and tested an evidence-based integrated intervention package called RHCC in order to improve the quality and availability of post-abortion care during a flood.





Avoidable Deaths Network

Another key project that was part of our past commitments includes the Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN). On 12 March 2019, Dr Nibedita S. Ray-Bennett in collaboration with Dr Hideyuki Shiroshita from Kansai University launched this global network which is currently convened by Dr Ray-Bennett. ADN is a diverse, dynamic, inclusive and innovative global membership network dedicated to avoiding human deaths from natural hazards, naturally triggered technological hazards and human-made disasters in low- and middle-income countries.

The ADN's mission is to promote interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and inclusive world-class impactful research and solutions to reduce disaster deaths and injuries. The ADN aims to promote sustainable collaboration, knowledge exchange and networking between state and non-state actors through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in order to advance the agenda of avoidable deaths. The ADN also aims to help policymakers and practitioners to make better decisions in saving lives and injuries in resource-poor context.

On 10 December 2021, ADN organised a daylong virtual symposium on 'Integrating Disaster Risk Management with Emergency Services and Defence to Reduce Avoidable Deaths' in the Caribbean region. The Symposium, the first of its kind, brought together the emergency services (viz. fire and rescue, civilian), defence (viz. navy, air-force, army, civilian), researchers and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to understand the role that the first responders play in reducing avoidable disaster deaths and the number of affected people by disasters in the Caribbean region in order to achieve the UNDRR's first two global targets. Further details of the Symposium can be found through this weblink: <https://www.avoidable-deaths.net/events-2/symposium/>

Among the items covered, one item stood out: the need for improving communication, coordination and collaboration (the "3C's") between the actors providing the first line of response in disaster situations – community volunteers, humanitarian organisations, emergency services, and defence agencies – and with critical support partners for

governmental authority, disaster coordination, financing, and private sector providers of logistical support. Accordingly, a key conclusion of the Symposium was to create a regional network connecting all first responders operating in the Caribbean and their critical support partners, in order to facilitate familiarity and trust, promote interaction, and share knowledge and experience.

To assess the need for this network, ADN carried out a series of stakeholder consultations from April to July 2022 funded by the University of Leicester's Knowledge Exchange Proof of Concept Fund. Consultations revealed a strong interest from all parties in addressing capacity gaps and the 3C's through this network, as well as a positive reception from the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), drawing on its coordination mandate, to act as the network's convener.

Drawing on the ideas and perspectives gained from the consultations, a "roadmap" has been prepared to realise the intentions expressed for connecting the key actors engaged in and supporting efforts to respond to disaster events in the countries and sovereign territories of the Caribbean, leveraging the power of community to reinforce the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM), reduce avoidable disaster deaths, and mitigate the extent of disruption through enhanced communication, coordination and collaboration.

On 22 November 2021, ADN has been invited to showcase at the **Sendai Framework Voluntary Commitments** (VC) platform operated by UNDRR. ADN's VCs can be found through this weblink: <https://sendaicommitments.undrr.org/u/home/commitments/preview/628>

The ADN's activities cross-cut the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction's first two global targets A and B and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially 1, 2, 3, 6, 11 and 17.



The ULSB Allotment

In the last UN PRME report, the School pledged to use the allotment in the redeveloped Brookfield campus to engage with students and the broader community outside the university by growing a diverse range of fruit and vegetables in a way that enhances people's psychological health and well-being, and supports the natural environment through sustainable growing practices.

Since summer 2021, the Plants and Gardening Society has organised regular events in the ULSB allotment ranging from social picnics to themed activities like the Halloween pumpkin carving sessions. Members of the society, ULSB students and staff have participated in these social events and contributed to maintaining the allotment - growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers. The latest harvest has proven particularly generous and included strawberries, potatoes, garlic and raspberries.

As COVID-19 restrictions have been eased and the university community is adapting to the new normal, more events will be planned in the coming months by the School in collaboration with the Plants and Gardening Society.

“Working on the ULSB allotment has been a great way for students and staff to get back outside following the COVID lockdowns, helping to improve our members’ physical and mental health. Now that the site has been newly renovated, we look forward to seeing its future growth and the positive impact this has on our members!”

Katie Holland, President of the Plants and Gardening Society



Climate Action Commitment

The Online Sustainability Challenge



Dr Deborah Price
Director of Distance Learning, Associate
Professor of Work and Employment



Dr Georgios Patsiaouras
Associate Professor in Marketing
and Consumption

In line with the commitment set out in the last report to increase awareness of environmental challenges amongst both ULSB students and staff, in August 2021, the University of Leicester School of Business ran an Online Sustainability Challenge (OSC). Recognising the role that business plays in both creating global warming and acting to reduce this, the School engaged 78 postgraduate students for a 48-hour virtual workshop. At the heart of the workshop was SDG 13- Climate action; however, in working towards global solutions, other goals such as SDG 7- Affordable, clean energy, SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure and SDG 11- Sustainable cities and communities were also taken into account. From the OSC, 39 people achieved their personal Carbon Literacy Accreditation, and the actions taken include:

- Individual and organisational changed buyer behaviour
- A switch to sustainability-informed organisational decision-making
- A tree-planting project in Uganda
- A commitment to plant two trees for each one felled for business expansion

In line with the SDGs, the Online Sustainability Challenge (OSC) emphasised the commitment of the School to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education (UN PRME). Whilst the OSC contributes to all of the UN PRME principles, we have used two here as an illustration.

UN PRME Principle 1 (<https://www.unprme.org/what-we-do>) - The OSC allows the School to meaningfully demonstrate how “we will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy”. Students’ capabilities are developed by teaching them about climate science. By exploring with them the role of business in both the problems and the solutions of global warming (SDG 9), the University helps them to appreciate what sustainable value for business and society actually means (SDG 11). By getting them to consider international and cross-sectoral perspectives on sustainability, we encourage a focus on inclusivity and global sustainability (SDG 13). Lastly, by enabling their production of personal and organisational action plans, we help them to demonstrate precisely HOW they will work for an inclusive and sustainable future.

UN PRME Principle 6 (ibid) states that “We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability”. The OSC has been designed and curated to create dialogue and debate between faculty, as educators, and our students (SDG 17). However, we recognise that our students are also organisational influencers, and stakeholders within the wider communities in which they live and work.



The OSC has therefore been able to disseminate an understanding of sustainability and the need for businesses to operate in a globally socially responsible way, through enabling students to lead by example across their networks.

The OSC has since been delivered to the ULSB Senior and Operations Management Team and their Carbon Literacy Accreditations are currently being assessed. Moreover, this now forms a core component of the University’s new MSc in Sustainable Futures, helping our geography students to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Environmental management

In order to measure the environmental impact of the School, a Social Impact Ambassadors Sustainability Audit was undertaken towards the end of 2020. The audit assessed the impact of the School on several dimensions: travel, water, community, procurement, waste, biodiversity, energy and catering. With an overall score of 78% - silver award - results showed that the School is performing extremely well, particularly on aspects concerning travel, procurement and catering. On a wider institutional level, the university launched a **Climate Change strategy** in 2020. This includes a **Net Zero Plus plan** detailing how the university intends to manage and reduce emissions in order to reach the net zero target by 2040. Environmental sustainability also appears as one of the four guiding principles of the newly launched **university strategy 2021-2031**. The university is committed to reduce the impact of its operations on the natural world and maximise its efforts towards environmental sustainability.

As part of this strategy, in the coming months the School of Business will start working towards a Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) under the supervision of the ULSB Sustainability Lead, the ULSB Environmental Coordinator and in collaboration with the Social Impact Team.

Construction

As part of the university’s commitment to reach net zero carbon and to develop a climate-resilient campus the design guides have been updated. These new design solutions aim to ensure that buildings and environments across campus are highly sustainable both in terms of their construction and continuing lifetime of operation. Measures have been put in place in order to minimise building’s CO₂ emissions and energy demand and to promote the use of renewable technology at first design principles. Protecting and enhancing the biodiversity is also integral to the university’s approach to climate change adaptation and therefore principles of biodiversity conservation have been integrated into estate planning and management with the intent to enhance existing habitats and create new green spaces. In addition to plans for sustainable drainage systems, the biodiversity design guide considers aspects concerning the retention of vegetation and habitats, the creation of new habitats for target and protected species and wildlife-friendly planting.

Part II: Case studies on research, teaching and engagement with stakeholders

Cultural Diversity and Inclusion in the Marketplace



Dr Cristina Galalae
Lecturer in Marketing and ULSB Director of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

As ULSB Director of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, Cristina leads the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by actively promoting, celebrating and raising awareness of EDI issues within the school.

Cristina's research explores cultural diversity within and across nations. Her efforts to expand knowledge on how multicultural and interconnected marketplaces can foster societal engagement and wellbeing are aligned with SDG 10 and SDG 5.

To exemplify, one of Cristina's recent projects demonstrates how individuals living in culturally diverse societies can use consumption to develop competences such as cultural adaptiveness. The study also demonstrates that we cannot assume that consumption of culturally cued offerings is always a mark of cultural openness. Indeed, people have various motivations for choosing them. However, marketing practitioners may activate these motivations to enable intercultural engagement.

A different contribution identifies the barriers that inhibit effective implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives in today's multicultural marketplaces. These barriers exist within and across fields and pertain to cultural-cognitive (shared meanings), normative (normative factors), and regulatory (rules and systems) pillars supporting the existence or transformation of institutions. Based on the research findings, this project offers specific guidance for institutional work within marketing's fields and policy developments needed to advance diversity and inclusion engaged marketing (DIEM) for enhancing multicultural marketplace wellbeing. An ongoing follow-up project addresses some of the identified barriers through the development of teaching tools and practices that foster inclusion through education in the field of marketing.

Alongside several researchers from various countries including France, Italy and the USA, Cristina is part of the Multicultural Marketplaces Network. The network has benefitted from funding offered by the Association for Consumer Research and from the ESRC-Impact Acceleration Account. In 2020, the network has received the Women in Marketing Award in the Marketing Scientist category, which recognises accomplishments of female leads in the marketing education sector.



Leicester University of Sanctuary project



2022 Sanctuary welcome event

A University of Sanctuary is an institution that ‘offers good practice in welcoming asylum seekers and refugees into the university community and fostering a culture of welcome and inclusion for all.’ This means welcoming asylum seekers and refugees onto university courses and providing incentives and routes for them to get involved.

Launched in 2017, the Leicester University of Sanctuary project involves colleagues from across the university coming together to support refugees and asylum seekers and actively involve them in university life. As part of this initiative, one ULSB student has benefitted from a sanctuary scholarship, funded by Santander Universities, consisting of a tuition fee waiver for the programme, as well as a study support package which is tailored to the needs of the individual student.

In addition, another four ULSB students have benefitted from a sanctuary scholarship for the Pre-sessional English Programme at the English Language Teaching Unit, helping them to gain essential skills as they settle in the UK; whilst thirteen students with a refugee background have enrolled in postgraduate and undergraduate programmes across the school in the period 2018-2022. ULSB is committed to continue supporting the sanctuary initiative by offering four sanctuary scholarships per year; including full fee waivers from a choice of three distance learning masters degree programmes: MSc Human Resource Management and Training, MSc Finance, and MSc Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management. By offering these opportunities to refugees and asylum seekers, the school contributes to the UN’s 15 by 30 charter agreement of increasing enrolment in HE of young refugee women and men to 15% by 2030. This commitment also promotes an inclusive and equitable education and helps to fight against poverty and inequality therefore aligning with SDGs 1, 4 and 10.



“I completed the masters degree with distinction and looking forward to my future opportunities. I would like to thank the University of Leicester for providing me such a great learning opportunity to follow my dream of studying for a masters in the financial field from which I have gained a lot.”

MSc university scholarship student

Ecological Embeddedness of Businesses



Dr Hana Trollman
Lecturer in Management

Dr Trollman has been involved in a number of large research projects, including the EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Industrial Sustainability, the EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Food, and H2020 Activating Circular Services in the Electric and Electronic Sector (C-SERVEES).

Her work focuses on the ecological embeddedness of business. Ecological embeddedness requires that both social relations and the natural environment are considered in the development of new business and governance models’ sustainability strategy, and in the implementation of new technology, such that there is a benefit to both economic actors and the natural environment. The majority of her research concentrates on the food industry, spanning farm to fork: considerations including food security, food waste, sustainable consumption and production, and disadvantaged actors in supply chains.

In previous studies, Dr Trollman developed models and tools to aid business in the transformation to ecologically embedded manufacturing. Examples include a transformational change framework, an assessment tool for manufacturer progress towards sustainability and a circularity indicator tool for the ecological embeddedness of manufacturing. This empirical research indicates that the understanding of sustainability is mostly at the level of legislative and regulatory compliance, considering quick wins, low-hanging fruit and public relations, but fails to achieve an overarching strategy that would support the SDGs.

Dr Trollman’s recent work extends ecological embeddedness from the consideration of individual businesses to their supply chain and the implementation of technology related to Industry 4.0 such as blockchain. Her research is not solely about highlighting shortcomings, but mainly proposes implementable solutions that are compatible with legitimate business interests and the SDGs.

As ecological embeddedness supports benefits to all economic actors and the natural environment, as part of a legitimate approach to circular economy, appreciation of the concept is intrinsically important in helping business manage challenges related to the SDGs in accordance with the Principles of the UN Global Compact.



Appreciation of the ecological embeddedness is intrinsically important in helping business manage challenges related to the SDGs in accordance with the Principles of the UN Global Compact.



RCDM Commonwealth Students

Risk Crisis and Disaster Management



Dr Nibedita S. Ray-Bennett
Associate Professor in Risk Management

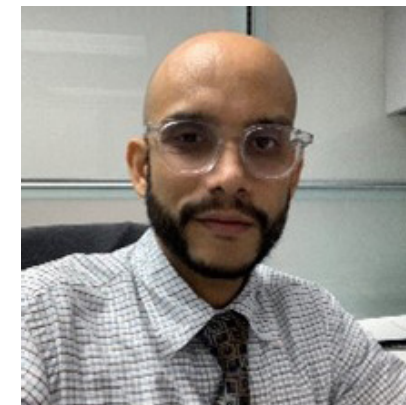
On 1 October 2020, the School of Business relaunched the distance learning MSc programme in Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management (RCDM). MSc RCDM is designed to be studied flexibly alongside the participant's career. The programme is aligned to uphold the Education for Sustainable Development, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well Being), and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). The MSc RCDM is highly relevant to policymakers, practitioners, and emergency services (among others) who are tackling systemic risk, poverty alleviation, and disaster risk on the frontline.

For the October 2020 intake, Dr Nibedita Ray-Bennett was successful in raising six Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships from the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) in the UK. Another two scholarships were approved by the CSC in April 2021. Eight Commonwealth Scholars from five countries are currently reading the MSc RCDM.



The MSc RCDM is highly relevant to policymakers, practitioners, and emergency services who are tackling systemic risk, poverty alleviation, and disaster risk on the frontline.

Testimonial – Commonwealth Scholarship



Krishna Clarke
Commonwealth student

The MSc Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management has helped to transform my career and broaden my knowledge in the general risk management field. It has undoubtedly enabled me to reach new heights in my current role as Research Analyst in the Office of the President at the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

I have always heard of the Commonwealth Scholarship, but I never believed that I would one day be a recipient of such a prestigious award. My previous studies were finance related of which my first master's degree was in the field of financial risk management. After attaining this degree, I was able to secure a job at the CDB as a Risk Analyst. Unlike commercial or investment banks, the Multilateral Development Bank had a special purpose which was not profit seeking, but for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Within the Office of Risk Management, risk was approached from an enterprise risk management or holistic view. It is through this lens, that I was able to appreciate other aspects of risk. Working together with colleagues in areas of disaster risk management, environmental sustainability and climate change has really opened my eyes to many possibilities and not just the financial aspect. It was therefore with great excitement, that a google search led me to the Commonwealth Scholarship opportunity and a programme that ticked off everything that I wanted to achieve while furthering my studies.

In August 2016, I was awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship, tenurable at the University of Leicester for two years. It comprised of distance learning with the opportunity to attend three study schools of intense training, including academic writing and research practices. Having a quantitative background did not prepare me for such an intense degree and I must admit, my academic writing skills prior to attending the University of Leicester was not to standard. This degree has really opened the door to understanding how and why we do research. I was able to fully grasp the methodologies and techniques which helped to prepare me for my current role as Research Analyst.

In January 2019, I was asked to join the University of Leicester and Kansai University's joint enterprise, the Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN). ADN is a diverse, dynamic, inclusive and innovative global membership network dedicated to avoiding human deaths from natural hazards, naturally triggered technological hazards and human-made disasters in low and middle-income countries. My role as Regional Coordinator enabled me to conduct further research and data analysis in the disaster risk field which helped to improve my skills and crystallise what I have learnt at university. The ADN is convened by one of the Co-Founders, none other than Dr Nibedita S. Ray-Bennett (Associate Professor in Risk Management, University of Leicester) and the Course Director for the MSc Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management. I was privileged to work on several projects such as 'Avoidable Deaths from the Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown in India' and most recently, 'Exploring the Feasibility and Value of a Regional Network for First Responders (RN4FR) to Reduce Avoidable Disaster Deaths in the Caribbean Region'. I am also the co-author of the paper 'Sendai Framework's Global Targets A and B: Opinions from the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019' for the International Journal for Disaster Risk Science. This paper was also written by Dr Nibedita S. Ray-Bennett, and Daniel Mendez, fellow Regional Coordinator for the ADN and Commonwealth Scholar.

I could not be more grateful for the opportunities that this scholarship has afforded me. The diverse backgrounds and rich knowledge pools to draw from the ADN has indeed helped me to develop my understanding of disaster risk management. Most importantly, the communication/exchange of ideas developed even after this course with the course director, other ADN colleagues and classmates has given me a sense of community that I am truly grateful for.

The GRADE Project



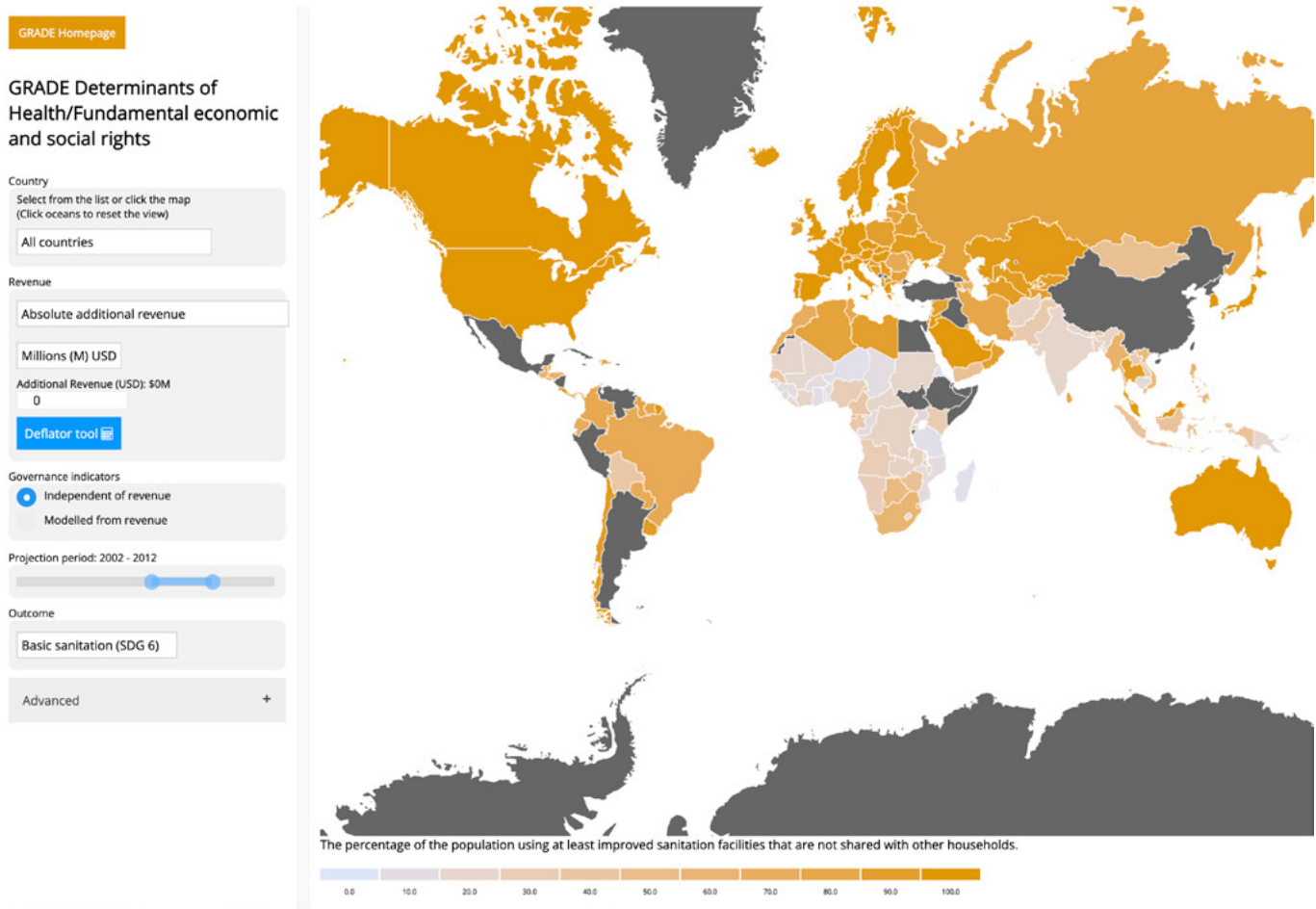
Professor Stephen Hall
Professor of Economics

The Government and Revenue Development Estimations (GRADE) project was established in 2020 by Dr Bernadette O'Hare at the University of St Andrews and Professor Stephen Hall at the University of Leicester, who have since led the GRADE team. The online tool was developed by Dr Stuart Murray, previously at St Andrews. The team also consists of Dr Marisol Lopez, Research Fellow and Dr Ellish Hannah at St Andrews.

The Government Revenue and Development Estimations (the GRADE) provides a precise and realistic model of the relationship between government revenue and 8 of the SDGs, namely under-five mortality, maternal death rates in childbirth, basic water supply, safe water supply, basic sanitation, safe sanitation, percentage schooling and immunisation rates for every country in the world, (there is currently an application to the ESRC to cover the rest of the 17 SDGs).

These health determinants are fundamental economic and social rights and targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, if a country is losing revenue as a result of tax abuse, the GRADE can be used to estimate the increased access to health determinants if there was an increase in government revenue equivalent to those losses. The GRADE can also provide realistic estimations of the impact of large taxpayers to public finances. The GRADE provides an online interactive tool which is open for anyone to use in order to calculate the effects of lost government revenues on the SDGs (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~grade/doh/>).

Encouragingly, GRADE has already had an impact. The Global Legal Action Network, Action Aid, Christian Aid, Oxfam and others used the GRADE to advocate for a review of Irish tax policies. A submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child was made by ActionAid Ireland, Christian Aid Ireland, Global Legal Action Network, the Integrated Social Development Centre (Ghana) and others. This important decision has also been highlighted by other organisations, including the IFC and the Church Action for Tax Justice. The Church Action for Tax Justice has also used the GRADE to advocate for tax justice. Dr O'Hare provided feedback on a report by the Church Action for Tax Justice, calling for a global tax rate to combat the economic impact of COVID-19. This report was mentioned in the Guardian. The Tax Justice Network used the GRADE to illustrate the link between tax abuse, government revenue and fundamental economic and social human rights which was covered by the International Tax Review and Law 360.



They also used the GRADE to demonstrate the impact of tax abuses on the right to education. Moreover, the team used the GRADE to estimate the impact of curtailing losses in government revenue to tax abuses. Results of this were published in an article on the Conversation, which was then shared by Yahoo News, Qrius, and the Global Policy.

The project has received funding from Global Challenges Research Fund, Scottish Funding Council, The Professor Sonia Buist Global Child Health Research Fund, Wellcome Trust ISSF funding, The Medical Research Council (MRC) Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) and has led to several publications published, amongst others, on Lancet Global Health, British Medical Journal Paediatrics, Global Public Health, European Journal of Economic Modelling and Econometrics, Harvard Health and Human Rights Journal and The Conversation.



The Government Revenue and Development Estimations (the GRADE) provides a precise and realistic model of the relationship between government revenue and 8 of the SDGs.



Difficult Conversations

University Centenary Public Talks

Difficult Conversations is a series of thought-provoking and informative talks hosted by Gary Dixon, Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the University's Council and facilitated by Turi King, Professor of Public Engagement and Genetics, and co-presenter with Stacey Dooley of BBC Two's DNA Family Secrets, at the School of Business Brookfield campus.

Started in November 2021, these free public talks aim to spark debate and provide fascinating insights into how we are addressing the global issues that affect us all.

The issues that have been discussed so far span from climate change to hate crimes, social justice and menopause and wellbeing.

The first event of the series 'Tackling hate: Striving for social justice' saw Professor Neil Chakraborti, Professor David Wilkin and Dr Amy Clarke in conversation with Isla Dixon (Hate Crime Officer for Leicestershire) and Chief Constable Simon Cole (Leicestershire Constabulary) discussing the nature and impact of hate crimes. In a world of escalating tensions and hostility, the participants looked at ways in which these episodes can be prevented or stopped.



Menopause is another challenging issue that was addressed by a pool of experts in March 2022. During this session titled 'The Menopause: It's a hot topic', Nicola Junkin, Helen Foster, Samina Malek (Consultant Gynaecologist), Dr Jesse Matheson (Senior Lecturer in Economics, The University of Sheffield) and Kate Muir (producer, Channel 4 programme 'Davina McCall: Sex, Myths and The Menopause') talked about the 'sloppy science' and distorted narrative that surround menopause and keep failing women going through this life changing event. The University of Leicester is one of the first institutions that have stepped up to this challenge by introducing a menopause policy in 2017, following a research study conducted by members of staff working at the School of Business.

In May 2022, Professor King facilitated another talk on the risks of the rising use of nuclear weapons. In discussion with Professor Andrew Futter, Professor in International Politics, and guests, the panel explored issues concerning SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong institutions - reflecting on how the frameworks and the thinking that have kept us safe since 1945 are slowly eroding. The core theme of one of the latest episodes of the series, 'Every breath we take', instead, is the pollution crisis. With 80% of the population living in areas where air quality exceeds safe limits, the panel led by Professor Paul Monks, Professor John Remedios, Professor Anna Hansell, Dr Karen Exley and Dr Joshua Vande Hey discussed about the impact of pollution on human health and on the ecosystems and reviewed around climate change and national heritage.

The Difficult Conversations series will continue raising difficult questions throughout 2022. More information and recordings of past events are available at <https://citizen.le.ac.uk/documentaries/difficult-conversations/>

'Every Breath we Take' event

Sustainability Oriented Supply chain



Dr Meng Jia

Lecturer in Operations and Supply Chain Management

Dr Jia's work focuses on the interactions and knowledge exchange across supply chain members within sustainability-oriented supplier development (SSD) initiatives.

In order to ensure adequate sustainability performance of the extended supply chains, it is common for focal firms, primarily western brands to adopt sustainability-oriented supplier development (SSD) projects to extend sustainability practices to suppliers. SSD extends supplier development to focus on the sustainability dimension of performance objectives.

Supply chain focal firms can either work directly with their suppliers or collaborate with non-traditional supply chain members such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and consultancies to disseminate sustainability knowledge and practice as these organisations are often either in a better position to work for sustainability or have additional resources that complement supply chain focal firms.

Dr Jia's research focuses more specifically on the role of suppliers, especially first-tier suppliers, and non-traditional supply chain actors in managing sustainability challenges and aims to reveal the processes and mechanisms of whether and how SSD initiatives can cascade smoothly to suppliers of multi-tiers. The context of the research is the occupational health and safety issues in supplier factories in China. This falls into the social dimension of sustainability and is highly relevant to several SDGs such as Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth and Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production. Moreover, the practical implications derived from the research could inform practitioners in global supply chains regarding how to better reap benefits from sustainability initiatives.

The project has already resulted in three journal articles and one working paper. One paper presented the current state-of-the-art of SSD research and practice by reviewing nearly 100 relevant papers published until 2020. Two empirical papers focused on suppliers' engagement in the sustainability initiatives, which is a less-discussed viewpoint in the literature. Results from the research also showcased the need to pay attention to the effective management and diffusion of sustainability knowledge along the supply chains. The working paper, instead, focuses on the collaboration between supply chain focal firms and third-party professional consultancies in implementing occupational health and safety projects. This piece of research is expected to contribute to the conversation of engaging non-supply chain members to achieve sustainability goals in global supply chains.

Currently, Dr Jia is collaborating with scholars from Brazil and other European countries trying to make research more impactful on a wider audience and community. The group is working on projects on a variety of topics including education and business school impact on sustainability and the change of mindsets in global supply chains in terms of sustainability.





Malawi Minister of Health and Minister of Information and Digitisation

Dis-/Mis-information on COVID-19 in Malawi



Professor Paul Baines
Professor of Political Marketing

Professor Baines from the School of Business, Professor Reiko Heckel from the School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences, working with University of Leicester students in Informatics, and Professor Sosten Chiotha, at Leadership for Environment and Development- Southern and Eastern Africa (LEAD-SEA) and the University of Malawi (funded by the University of Leicester QR Global Challenges Research Fund; Research England), undertook a project during 2021 to evaluate and assess COVID-19 dis- and mis-information in Malawi using Twitter and WhatsApp sentiment analyses at a critical point during the global pandemic.

The Twitter analysis used the Pulsar platform to collect and analyse 22,781 tweets in English containing a reference to COVID-19 over the period from January 2020 to July 2021. The WhatsApp analysis included the collection of messages in multiple languages (including indigenous languages) from a selection of COVID-19 themed WhatsApp groups from January 2020 to July 2021.

The research incorporated a stakeholder workshop in Lilongwe in August 2021 focused on strategies and policy response in managing social media communication on COVID-19, the role of faith-based groups and government response to disinformation and guidance on further research and appropriate methodologies. The workshop was organised by the University of Leicester, LEAD-SEA and the Malawian Ministry of Health, on the 19 August 2021 and attracted around 50 people, including three cabinet ministers: the Minister of Health, Hon Khumbize Chiponda; Minister of Information and Digitisation, Hon Gospel Kazako and Minister of Civic Education and National Unity, Hon Timothy Mtambo.



The event was covered favourably by both the print press (Malawi News) and broadcast Press (Zodiak and Malawi Broadcasting Corporations news bulletins). A final report is to be published in autumn 2022.

Taking the two components of the research together, the analysis allowed the team to make a number of observations including: only a minority of Twitter users supported and spread misinformation; available analytic methods did not give an indication of actual levels of support for COVID-19 dis-/misinformation; more detailed manual analysis did not scale and could not easily be automated; there was scope for the use of machine learning to automate and scale the manual analysis.

The research team found that community radios were not used in the census period to share COVID-19 information but should be considered since they were a popular medium to listen to news amongst Malawian citizens. It was interesting to note that misinformation in the English language was common on social and mainstream media, yet very few of the population could actually comprehend it. It is likely therefore that they were responding to hearsay and rumour based on those initial social media posts as relayed by others.

The analysis also indicated that faith leaders are critical to the process of both COVID-19 dis-/misinformation, and the communication necessary to debunk the dis-/misinformation because of their disproportionate influence on Malawian citizens' beliefs and the presence of religious conspiracy theories associated with COVID-19.

The study allowed the research team to make a number of policy recommendations including: local languages should be used to communicate COVID-19 information; there should be a rapid official response to misinformation including efforts to debunk false information; the Malawi Communication Regulatory Authority (MACRA) should consider taking a lead role in managing COVID-19 fake news; government ministries in Malawi including the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Civic Education and National Unity, should work in collaboration using a comprehensive approach; and that a national campaign to educate faith leaders on COVID-19 was necessary so that they could take an active role in educating their own congregants correctly about COVID-19.



Malawi Covid Workshop

Sustainable tourism in emerging destinations during the COVID-19 pandemic



Jorge Hernan Jorquera Borquez
Doctoral Student in Marketing

Jorge Hernan Jorquera Borquez’s research work pertains to the area of *sustainable tourism*, which has been defined by the UN World Tourism Organisation as tourism that “takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNWTO, 2005). After more than 30 years of sustainable tourism debate, many academics claim that this approach has still not been fully adopted in practice due to a series of criticisms derived from its conceptual ambiguousness, idealistic character, and its apparent paradoxical nature considering that the notion of sustainability seems to be at odds with the growth-oriented tourism development agenda. These issues have arguably contributed to the existence of differing perceptions of sustainable tourism across destination stakeholders, which has been deemed detrimental for the sustainable development of tourism destinations.

In the specific context of emerging destinations, the way in which destination stakeholders understand sustainability and approach its principles when engaging in tourism-related activities and planning endeavours aimed at fostering tourism development remains understudied. In addition, the ways in which destination stakeholders perceive the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the livelihood of emerging tourism destinations and their sustainability is an area that requires further investigation. Examining these aspects remains critical for understanding how emerging tourism destinations can foster development that is sustainable and recover in a way that is beneficial for their host communities and society at large.

Informed by the three-pillar approach of sustainability and stakeholder theory, Jorge’s work examines multi-stakeholders’ perceptions of sustainability of tourism destinations. More specifically, the project focuses on exploring the extent to which sustainability principles underpin the development of emerging destinations, and how the COVID-19 crisis has affected the sustainability of emerging destinations.



Jorge Hernan Jorquera Borquez during data collection in the Aysen Region - Patagonia, Chile

The Aysen Region in Chilean Patagonia has been chosen as the setting for this project. In recent years, this destination, while remaining largely unexplored and wild, has experienced a sustained growth in tourist figures due to factors such as increased international recognition, improved air connectivity and destination marketing endeavours aimed to strengthen its positioning as a relevant destination within the Patagonian landscape. As a consequence, many actors claim that the region is not able to accommodate the ever-growing amount of tourists visiting during high season. The arrivals’ growth rate arguably outpaces the rate in which the region develops infrastructure, tourism-related facilities and accommodation that can meet visitors’ demand, thus causing sustainability issues in some tourism hotspots across the territory.

Primary data has been collected from two study sites within the region: Puerto Río Tranquilo, a village reliant on its tourism activity and home to the famous Marble Caves; and Puerto Aysén, a town historically sustained by its fishing industry that has recently put tourism at the centre of its development plan. While the former experiences social issues related to overtourism, the latter recently started to struggle to meet the visitors’ demand for serviced accommodation during the holiday season. Perceptions around these challenges, the adoption of sustainability and the consequences of the pandemic lie at the core of this investigation that hopes to shed light on the future of sustainable tourism development, as well as inform public debates and policies for the recovery of emerging destinations.



Business Ethics and the UNGC



Dr Sigmund Wagner-Tsukamoto
Associate Professor

As leader of the undergraduate core module, Business Ethics, in 2021-2022, Dr Wagner-Tsukamoto brought the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and its sister initiatives the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) into his teaching. The figure below illustrates how the SDGs mapped across the twenty lectures that made up the module Business Ethics. A wide variety of the seventeen SDGs was covered, but seven SDG principles were especially prominently in the lecture content of the module: ‘4 Quality Education’, ‘8 Decent Work and Economic Growth’, ‘10 Reduced Inequalities’, ‘11 Sustainable Cities and Communities’, ‘12 Responsible Consumption and Production’, ‘16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’, and ‘17 Partnerships for the Goals’.

The SDG ‘16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’ was associated with all lectures of the module, since each of the twenty lectures, in its own terms, inquired about the question of justice and fairness in relation to a certain concept of business ethics. The module contents had four sections on ethics: classical business ethics, economic business ethics, religious business ethics and pragmatic business ethics. Each section had a number of lectures and was concluded by an integrative lecture on implications for the UNGC. The integrative lectures also contributed to the SDG goal 17, of creating strong ‘Partnerships for the Goals’.

Lectures	UN SDG goals																
1 Introduction																	
2 Virtue ethics & business																	
3 Duty ethics & business																	
4 Utilitarianism & business																	
5 UNGC & classical business																	
6 Economic business ethics																	
7 Prisoners dilemma																	
8 Friedman & business																	
9 Adam Smith & business																	
10 UNGC & economic business ethics																	
11 Confucian business ethics																	
12 Islamic business ethics																	
13 Christian business ethics																	
14 UNGC & religious business ethics																	
15 Stakeholder ethics																	
16 CSR																	
17 Humanistic management																	
18 Sustainability management																	
19 UNGC & pragmatic business ethics																	
20 Module review																	



Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum



Dr Ning Baines
Lecturer in Marketing

It has been widely recognised that sustainability should be included in all university activities for ensuring education for sustainable development. Previous studies have looked into this agenda from different angles, for example, criteria in assessing sustainability in HE, drivers or barriers in implementing sustainability in HE or quality assurance enhancing sustainability in HE. However, these studies tend to address the subject from macro level of strategic HE management. There is still a gap in pedagogical knowledge on how sustainability can be integrated within teaching programmes or modules to enhance sustainability, which forms part of professional formation of students.

In the marketing discipline, Peattie and Peattie (2009) highlight the paradox and tension between commercial marketing techniques and achieving social objectives. Millar et al (2012) argue that greater consideration is needed in how academic and practitioner bodies can move the sustainability agenda forward in business.

Arguably, it is now educators’ responsibility to do this, particularly as universities can be seen as central players in the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. If graduates recognise the importance of a more sustainable society, it is more likely to happen. Hence, sustainable and responsible marketing are regarded as important issues to integrate and embed into the marketing curriculum. To address the aim and objectives above, Dr Ning Baines together with academic colleagues from De Montfort University and Loughborough University collected primary data by adopting a mixed methodology approach.

- 1. An initial quantitative inquiry has been adopted whereby desk research is conducted to search and collect information of stand-alone sustainable modules included in Marketing programmes offered by 120 UK HEIs, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Four clusters have emerged and typologies are built up based on type of university, nature of marketing programme etc.
- 2. Based on typologies derived from the previous stage, a qualitative inquiry has been adopted by conducting 32 in-depth interviews (30-45 minutes) with marketing programme leaders (across the UK). This data is crucial to inform subsequent potential practical implications.

Given the importance of the subject matter and HEIs’ commitment with the UN SDGs, this research has potential for significant impact and supports HEIs’ mission to put sustainable development goals at the heart of education. The outcomes of research are expected to provide some insights on evaluating the extent to which sustainability is embedded in undergraduate and postgraduate marketing programmes across UK HEIs. Additionally, it aims to extend the knowledge on the value-based driving factors and approaches in developing sustainability modules within the marketing curriculum. It will provide insight into alignment between university sustainability values and impact on the curriculum and consider the benefits of holistically embedding sustainability into the marketing curriculum versus creating specialist modules. It will also provide understanding of the potential for building sustainability into the curriculum in other subject areas.





Black Excellence Symposium

ULSB Black Excellence (UBE) Group

The ULSB Black Excellence (UBE) group hosted its first Black Excellence Symposium, 'Black Excellence: Shaping an Inclusive and Sustainable Future', on 23 March 2022 at the School's Brookfield campus. The symposium is the most recent UBE event addressing challenges pertaining to the prominent awarding, satisfaction and employment gaps of Black students. Chaired by Associate Professor Winfred Onyas, it aimed to promote dialogue between students, practitioners and academics in constructing an inclusive and sustainable future for University of Leicester students.

The Symposium included a keynote, panel discussion and networking session, and featured a business and professional exhibition as well as a student poster competition. Participants included students and staff, and practitioners from the Leicester business community.

Notable symposium guests included: the keynote speaker, Eugene Nizeyimana (CEO and Director, African Business Chamber); panellists Dr Maureen Paul (Interim Chief Economist, Ofgem; now Ofgem's Deputy Director, Retail Market Policy), Byron Dixon OBE (Founder and CEO, Micro-Fresh), and Sandra Pollock OBE (Founder and CEO, The Women's Awards and SHINE Magazine); and Councillor Dr Ashiedu Joel (Leicester City Council) who delivered the Post-Symposium Challenge. The President and Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Nishan Canagarajah and the Dean of the School of Business, Professor Dan Ladley, also participated.

The President and Vice Chancellor stressed the University's commitment to address all barriers to race equality. He noted University initiatives to embed equality, diversity and inclusivity at all levels, including the new interdisciplinary Leicester Institute for Inclusivity in Higher Education and decolonising the curriculum.

Left to right: Pierre N. Mbara, Councillor Dr Ashiedu Joel, Professor Nishan Canagarajah, Professor Clive Fraser, Sandra Pollock OBE, Byron Dixon OBE, Associate Professor Winfred Onyas, Dr Zovanga Kone, Eugene Nizeyimana.



Some of the UBE student organisers of the Symposium

Professor Canagarajah emphasised the need to succeed collectively as one university and community, and applauded UBE and the School of Business' efforts to break down barriers to excellence. Professor Ladley highlighted the School's commitment to addressing issues of inclusivity and sustainability, citing the work of UBE and the School's Athena Swan recognition and commitment to responsible management education among others.

He underlined the School's international recognition for its significant contributions to research that tackles some of the world's biggest challenges, and pledged to strengthen the School's connections to business and the wider community to create mentorship and employment opportunities for students.

Mr Nizeyimana's keynote focused on megatrends transforming the global economy and markets, such as COVID-19 and climate change. He emphasised the cruciality of addressing institutional gaps and failures in shaping an inclusive and sustainable future and challenged students to enhance their personal capabilities to become drivers of their destinies. The future, Mr Nizeyimana predicted, will be more expansive, complex, and fast-changing, opening new growth opportunities and competitive challenges.

Moderated by Dr Zovanga Kone (UBE Chair), the panel, which also included ULSB academics, Professor Clive Fraser and Pierre Ngon Mbara, tackled questions on equal access and opportunities for Black students, provoking debate on shaping a future protecting our environment, economy and society.

In her Post-Symposium Challenge, Dr Joel urged university, business and community leaders to appreciate students' cultural differences and to support them through mentors, role models and networks. She shared insights on tackling inclusion, including ensuring fair and equitable access, developing partnerships, and clear communication. Addressing award and satisfaction gaps, Dr Joel stated, requires a willingness to engage in honest conversations, tackling challenging questions on inclusivity.

Judged by Dr Charles-Cadogan (ULSB), Rajinder Bhuhi (Leicester Innovation Hub) and Tobias Gould (Leicester Innovation Hub), the winners of the student poster competition were Windia Jaunai (Enterprise Challenge: Sustainable Farming: Jaunai Farms) and Emese Szigeti (Research Project: Black Excellence: Shaping an Inclusive and Sustainable Future). The runner-up was Emily Braithwaite (Enterprise Challenge: Grow Together Project—Create a Rainbow).



Panel discussion: Left to right, Dr Zovanga Kone (moderator) and panellists: Sandra Pollock OBE, Byron Dixon OBE, Dr Maureen Paul (on screen), Professor Clive Fraser and Pierre N. Mbara.



The judges and winners / runner up of the student poster competition: Left to right: Rajinder Bhuhi, Windia Jaunai, Emily Braithwaite, Dr Charles-Cadogan, Emese Szigeti and Tobias Gould.

10

REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



Experiences of minority ethnic students at the University of Leicester



Dr Chandrima Roy
Lecturer in Work, Employment, Management and Organisation



Dr Reka Plugor
Associate Professor of Work and Employment

Education plays a key role in reducing inequality, enabling upward socioeconomic mobility and spurring economic growth. In the context of university education in the UK, reducing inequalities has been a key area of focus for policy makers, educators, regulators and the Government. Although there has been an increase in the number of disadvantaged and under-represented students progressing to university in the UK, gaps by social and geographical background and by ethnicity and disability persist. Barriers to academic achievement, retention and progression to desired careers for minority ethnic students (denoted as BAME or BME in reports and articles) have been widely reported. One of the key messages from previous studies with BAME students is that BAME difference is either dismissed or avoided (Hammond et al. 2019).

When it comes to higher education, the access to and experiences are not equitable either, given Black, Asian minority ethnic (BAME) students are more likely to drop out without completing their degrees and there remains a substantive awarding gap of good degree qualifications between white and BAME students across the sector (Williams et al., 2019). The Office for Students (OfS) documents significant and concerning underrepresentation of minority ethnic students in postgraduate research and the need “to improve access into research, enhance research culture and the experience for Black, Asian and minority ethnic PGR students, and diversify and enhance routes into a range of careers” (OfS Press and Media, 24 November 2021). The available HESA data from between 2014/2015 and 2017/2018 shows a concerning picture for BAME students’ progression to higher degrees.

In the University of Leicester, we find an increase in BAME student numbers in the undergraduate provision, with an expansion seen in all ethnicity categories. However, there is a ‘leaky pipeline’ clearly when it comes to postgraduate studies, given the ratio of BAME students drops substantially for postgraduate taught programmes, and even further for postgraduate research degrees indicating that there are structural problems the same students face when it comes to progression to higher level degrees. One of the important local initiatives at the University of Leicester include the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (CSSAH) BAME Scholarships at postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) levels which build on the successful MA diversity scholarships previously championed by the University of Leicester School of Museum Studies.



One of the important local initiatives at the University of Leicester include the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (CSSAH) BAME Scholarships at postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) levels which build on the successful MA diversity scholarships previously championed by the University of Leicester School of Museum Studies.

Dr Plugor and Dr Roy’s current research contributes further to address this issue by trying to understand the perception and experiences of minority ethnic students about different aspects of their university life (sense of belonging, sense of community, social capital, well-being and future plan) within the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (CSSAH). Funded by the CSSAH Research Development Fund, University of Leicester, the project is conducted in collaboration with the University of Leicester Institute for Inclusivity in Higher Education (ULIHE) and the Centre for Sustainable Work and Employment Futures (CSWEF). Through this research, Dr Plugor and Dr Roy aim to listen and voice minority ethnic students’ experiences and concerns.

They also aim to uncover the barriers in such students’ access and transitions into postgraduate research studies, their success within PGR degrees and their transitions into an academic post. The project also seeks to develop understanding of PGR supervisors’ awareness of the support needs of their minority ethnic PGR students, their approaches to inclusion and building sense of belonging and the challenges faced in navigating the academic and pastoral elements of the supervisory role. These constitute important aspects of making the research environment and culture inclusive and welcoming to all in CSSAH and hence deliver on the UN SDG Goals 3, 4, 10 promoting well-being at all ages; increasing access to education and ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all respectively. The ethos of this research strongly informs also Dr Plugor’s and Dr Roy’s teaching. Principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in their teaching and they support strategies to increase student participation and improve attainment, raise expectations and build links with employers.



Mompreneurs’ wellbeing



Sruthi John
Doctoral student in Management

Sruthi’s research explores the psychological well-being of mompreneurs within the South Indian context. In spite of women’s contribution to economic progress, their efforts have largely been sidelined. Furthermore, whenever research was conducted on women entrepreneurs, tools and scales which were formulated after exploring male entrepreneurs were used. Numerous challenges such as patriarchal structures, lack of effective role models, absence of effective networking communities, ignorance of available schemes, or sometimes even lacking faith and conviction in themselves have hindered their progress.

Sruthi’s project revolves around those mompreneurs who are pulled into entrepreneurship.

Women entrepreneurs, by no conceptualisation, can be regarded as a homogeneous group. This broad category comprises women from different age groups, life stages, educational qualifications etc., who are involved in running and managing their own ventures. Sruthi’s research focuses specifically on mompreneurs. Managing a household definitely enhances adaptability and acceptance. It also teaches one to weather storms, extrinsic or intrinsic, with a brave outlook. These traits imbibed within multi-tasking mothers translate into efficient multi-tasking entrepreneurs (provided they have the motivation to run a venture).

Motivation to be an entrepreneur can either come from extrinsic sources or intrinsic sources. Some women are pushed or maybe dragged into entrepreneurship because of a lack of choice. They may be facing financial issues, the death of the family breadwinner, or it could be due to the glass ceiling present in their organisation. On the other hand, women might be pulled or drawn towards entrepreneurship by choice. They are motivated to create a difference and to use their skills and abilities to add more meaning to their lives and to others. These entrepreneurs sense opportunities awaiting in the market and pounce upon them to lead a more fulfilling existence, aligned with their true selves. Accordingly, the mental well-being of entrepreneurs who are pulled into entrepreneurship and pushed into entrepreneurship would be vastly different.

Sruthi’s project revolves around those mompreneurs who are pulled into entrepreneurship. Leveraging the field of positive psychology and adopting a phenomenological interpretivist paradigm, her research seeks to understand the positive mental functioning of mompreneurs. Data is collected through a series of semi-structured interviews. Results of her current research will contribute to SDGs 3, 5 and 8.



ULSB Virtual Career Development Exhibition



The first Career Development Exhibition, held in July 2020, was conceived during the initial months of the COVID pandemic as a means of bringing together students and University staff, in partnership with employers and professional bodies, in an increasingly remote and volatile world. Alongside a focus on career prospects and where to access career and professional development support, the aim was to give our students from across the globe a sense of community. The exhibition considers career development and workplace practice from a number of angles including: equality and diversity, health and wellbeing, the value of lifelong learning and inspiring entrepreneurship and innovative thinking.

The exhibition has now become an annual event, growing year-on-year from six sessions in 2020 to twelve sessions in 2021 and fourteen sessions in 2022.

Below are examples of sessions that were delivered as part of the 2021 exhibition.

2021 ULSB Virtual Career Development Exhibition: The Future of Work

In 2021, the Career Development Exhibition turned its spotlight on ‘The Future of Work’. In our digitally driven, global environment, the demands and challenges faced in the workplace continue to escalate. Sessions considered the workplace from differing angles including: the changing requirements of employers, the landscape in relation to opportunities and the ways in which managers need to adapt to respond to workplace and workforce needs.

Chartered Management Institute (CMI): The Future Skills You Need

CMI delivered a valuable session on the changing nature of work and the skills required by managers and leaders in a world transformed by new technologies and societal changes. They considered the topic from the perspective of the public good, looking at how best to help managers transition to a rapidly changing, tech-driven workplace without widespread disruption and undue concern. Key areas of focus included supporting changing work patterns, supporting a more diverse and inclusive workforce and the importance of lifelong learning.

Managing Stress and Preventing Burnout

Undoubtedly, the isolation of the epidemic led to a downturn in mental health and well-being. Lizzie Crewe, ULSB Student Support Manager, led a practical session on identifying and managing the risk of stress. The session considered stress management and burnout prevention from the manager perspective and the huge importance open and supportive communication and empathy play in management practices going forward. It provided participants with tools and techniques to apply to both their personal and professional practice.



Adaptive Leadership in an Uncertain World

Claire Thompson, Tuning Talent: Executive Coach and Development Consultant, delivered a thought-provoking session, reflecting on the challenges of leadership in an uncertain world and the key skills required in order to act as positive agents of change. In a VUCA world, where people increasingly work remotely from colleagues and clients, the relationships, processes and means by which we communicate with and support each other in our teams have become increasingly important. Adaptive leadership is, paradoxically, about knowing what to do when you don't know what to do. Rather than having a fixed mind-set, adaptive leaders learn through experimentation, managing the context in which they find themselves and cultivating a diversity of views to generate a wealth of options. Alongside this, adaptive leaders possess emotional intelligence, demonstrating self-awareness, an appreciation of the feelings of others and the ability to 'read' social situations. During uncertain times, resilience – the ability to recover from negative experiences and to become stronger whilst overcoming them – is vital. Individuals should focus on developing new capabilities around adaptability and agility, whilst acquiring the skills and attributes necessary to demonstrate personal leadership, relationship-building, leading by example and demonstrating a more empathetic approach when driving change and results.

Social Entrepreneurship: Inspiring, Innovating and Inventing for the Future

Enactus is an international organisation that works directly towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It connects student, academic and business leaders through entrepreneurial-based projects that empower people to transform opportunities into real, sustainable progress for themselves and their communities. Examples of projects include: Toast of the Town which reduces food waste by turning unused bread into locally brewed lager and ReCloth which uses recycled plastic bottles to produce winter clothes for the homeless. During this session, Enactus shared details of recent projects and the impact their work has for societal good and also creative career thinking, employability and career success via development of key transferable skills and building valuable networks.

2022 ULSB Virtual Career Development Exhibition:

In 2022, the Career Development Exhibition focused on 'Shaping Your Future: Employability and Career Success.' The fourteen live sessions aimed to inform and inspire our students in relation to their future career plans. Using business leaders, professional bodies, career and enterprise professionals and alumni the event gave an insightful look into both the world of work and professional development.

Below are examples of sessions that were delivered as part of the 2022 exhibition.

Expert Panels: HR, Marketing, Banking, Finance, Procurement and Start-Up

As part of the event, we held a number of the expert panel insights into HR, marketing, banking, finance, procurement and start-up with speakers from organisations including Boots, Inspired Villages, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Isuzu Motors, University of Leicester, Leicester Innovation Hub, Leicester Start-Ups and NatWest. Discussion included the importance of mental health and wellbeing, dignity and respect in the workplace, the value of lifelong learning and upskilling and sustainable business practices.

Inclusive Leadership

Laura Haycock: Managing Director, Brew People is a Chartered Psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. She has over 25 years of consultancy experience working with leading organisations across all aspects of organisational development and talent management. In 2021, Laura launched Brew People that takes a whole-systems approach to diversity and inclusion. Described in feedback as 'powerful' Laura gave a hugely insightful and thought-provoking session on inclusive leadership. She considered why organisations are increasingly focused on equity, diversity and inclusion and the value this delivers for organisational performance and for people. Laura also explored the challenges in achieving positive change and the role that leaders and individual team members can play in creating a thriving inclusion ecosystem.



Leicester Masterclass 2022

Social Enterprise

Building on the Leicester Masterclass (2021), in which 78 ULSB postgraduate distance learning students undertook the Online Sustainability Challenge, the Leicester Masterclass 2022 was themed around social enterprise and returned to being held in-person at Brookfield. As the world in which we live in seems to lurch from one crisis to another, the Masterclass aimed to promote the need for all organisations to consider where and how they can invest in social enterprise. As such, throughout the week, students explored the role that business can play in improving the economic, environmental and social contexts within which we all live.

Taking advantage of the globally diverse nature of the School's postgraduate distance learning cohort, and of their senior and influential positions within their organisations, the Masterclass highlighted the role that business can play in addressing global inequities and inequalities.

The Masterclass started by hearing the views of academic and practitioner experts. The students had the opportunity to understand what a social enterprise is, the way in which this sits within wider socio-economic environments, and the challenges of running these ventures. Speakers included Dr Nibedita Ray-Bennett, the founder of the Avoidable Deaths Network and Associate Professor in Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management, and Dorothy Francis OBE, co-director of the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Agency.

Students were then directed to focus on SDG 1: The elimination of poverty, and using this as their objective, they determined how to convert a thriving existing business into a social enterprise. The rationale behind this masterclass was to encourage students to draw on their business acumen and entrepreneurial skills to produce new ideas for improving the ways in which we do things. With this exercise we therefore hoped to demonstrate that embedding social enterprise into what organisations do, can help our collective global efforts to achieve the UN SDGs.



Homeworking and Wellbeing in the COVID-19 pandemic



Professor Stephen Wood
Professor of Management

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments encouraged or mandated homeworking. Initial media reporting of enthusiasm for working at home fed into a narrative that it would soon become part of a new normal. However, mass homeworking may not be inevitable or necessarily desirable. At the outset of the pandemic, Professor Wood and colleagues developed a longitudinal study to examine the impact of this public health initiative on homeworkers’ well-being. The research team administered two sets of weekly surveys throughout May and September 2020 involving over 800 university employees in the UK.

Findings showed that the average levels of wellbeing or mental health (measured by anxiety, depression and the meaningfulness of life) were most affected, in both periods, by loneliness and the inability to detach oneself from work. These downsides are factors that were already found to be significant in past studies conducted on homeworking. However, other factors were found to be associated with the weekly fluctuations in wellbeing, including job autonomy, the degree of support from colleagues, and work–nonwork conflict. Here, the pandemic was deemed important as the daily change in the COVID-19 death rate had a significant effect on the weekly fluctuations in wellbeing throughout May, with it affecting older workers more, but not in September.



The research team also examined factors specific to the enforced nature of the pandemic. For example, they asked about the extent to which work could be done normally, and whether IT support or caring responsibilities affected the ability to work at home. Surprisingly, such factors were insignificant for both average levels and fluctuations in wellbeing.

Finally, over 75% of the respondents reported being satisfied with home working, alongside over 50% typically reporting being anxious in any one week. Results showed that factors affecting the level of satisfaction with homeworking were not identical to those that affect wellbeing. For example, the length of commute time had an impact on satisfaction with homeworking but no effect on employees’ wellbeing.

Results of this research reveal that companies and public institutions must guard against over-reliance on reported satisfaction levels when making decisions about the future of homeworking, no matter how thoroughly these are compiled. The causes of poor wellbeing are where the priority should lie. Yet satisfaction levels may give clues for future actions. In the study, questions on satisfaction with specific things such as support from senior management, line management and IT were informative as they all declined between spring and autumn, whereas satisfaction with peers and partners or cohabitees increased. The question for organisations is whether problems of employees feeling unsupported reflect longstanding issues that the pandemic has accentuated, and which point to wider issues that require in-depth consideration.

The results of this project contribute to the debate around flexible working and have the potential to inform decisions about working arrangements post-pandemic. Developing homeworking policy must be part of a vision of healthy workplace, and a realisation that a healthy organisation depends on a healthy workforce. The current emphasis on employee wellbeing initiatives in many organisations and professional circles is targeted at stress not stressors, coping with but not eliminating the causes of stress. Professor Wood’s research has shown that any successful extension of homeworking must address the potential it has to create loneliness and blur boundaries between work, the family and leisure. Addressing such issues highlights that the challenges organisations face are crying out for intensive employee involvement, itself a source of wellbeing. The focus should be on identifying new ideas, facilitators, constraints and stressors, and less on training for imposed changes or programmes for coping with stress without regard for its underlying causes.

Sharing and Rental Economy Assessment



Dr Nicola Bateman
Associate Professor in Operations Management
Associate Dean Marketing and
Global Engagement

As part of Operations Management, a second-year undergraduate module, students were required to complete a business report which this year focused on the move away from the fast fashion and high consumption models towards the sharing and rental economy. Students were required to select a business either from the clothes rental or furniture rental sector and explore the operations management issues associated with this model. Students engaged enthusiastically with this assignment selecting companies such as the Hurr Collective who rent clothes or Fat Llama who rent furniture for John Lewis.

The assignment represented a good academic challenge as this is an emerging area of studies. It also enabled students to be made aware of new business models that fit with the UN SDG’s particularly goal 12 responsible consumption and production. Moreover, the assignment encouraged students to explore the benefits and challenges of these types of models and gain a deeper understanding of how businesses can inhabit the entrepreneurial space afforded by emerging opportunities in sustainable development.

Assignment encouraged students to gain a deeper understanding of how businesses can inhabit the entrepreneurial space afforded by emerging opportunities in sustainable development.



Bridging the Digital Gender Divide



Dr Winfred Onyas
Associate Professor in Marketing

The School recently concluded a project on ‘Bridging the Digital Gender Divide to Stimulate Growth in African Digital Economies’ (May 2020 – July 2021), which sought to develop a framework to cultivate cross-sectoral partnerships and solutions in addressing the digital gender gap in the region. The £117,883 project was funded by the UK Research and Innovation, Global Challenges Research Fund, and focused on Uganda and Ghana.

Led by the University of Leicester, in partnership with Makerere University Business School, the University of Ghana, Africa Technology Business Network, UK, and Gender and Policy Insights, UK, along with five digital stakeholders in Uganda and Ghana, the project focused on building a network to deliver Official Development Assistance (ODA) impact and foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Africa. It addressed Sustainable Development Goals 5 (gender equality and empowering all women and girls), 8 (sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth) and 17 (strengthening partnerships for sustainable development).

The project activities included: stakeholder consultations and co-creation workshops involving policy makers, leading innovation hubs, female entrepreneurs and businesses in Uganda and Ghana; partner university-hosted workshops to develop academic insights on the findings from the stakeholder consultations and co-creation workshops; an international online forum to enable knowledge sharing on addressing the digital gender divide in Africa at scale; and digital equality awards to recognise digital impact makers in Ghana and Uganda who are working to push the boundaries of digital inclusion and transformation in Africa.

Dr Winfred Onyas, an Associate Professor in Marketing and the project’s Principal Investigator, highlighted five challenge themes which emerged from the stakeholder consultations: culture, which affects the pipeline of women digital leaders; gaps in gender lens investment; inadequate resources to run gender sensitive programs; bureaucracy in accessing and reporting to funders; and perceptions by stakeholders that the female market is not viable. At the co-creation workshops, the solutions generated pertained to capacity building and networking; infrastructure and funding; gender-sensitive programming; policy interventions and knowledge sharing. A key project output, she added, was the development of policy briefs, which were presented to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in Uganda and the Ministry of Communications in Ghana.

“To deliver impact, we built knowledge on the drivers of, and the strategies to address the digital gender divide in Africa; as well as cross-sectoral digital ecosystem networks, which catalysed knowledge sharing between digital practitioners and academics”, Dr Onyas commented. The research team formed the Coalition for Digital Equality (CODE) network, which continues to play a central role in sustaining engagement with members, including digital ecosystem stakeholders, academics in Africa and UK, global investors, and industry experts.



The Future Success Programme

The Future Success Programme was developed in response to the impact of COVID-19 on students’ mental health. Mind (2021) reported that nearly three quarters (73%) of students experienced a decline in their mental health during lockdown. The University of Leicester responded appropriately, putting in place additional resources for students of qualified staff, including pastoral and academic support. However, with the continued uncertainty of the future and new norms to adjust to, it was clear that more needed to be done by way of preventing the decline in students’ mental health.

The programme was designed to reach students at the beginning of their academic journey: to help them build critical skills, such as resilience, self-awareness and positive wellbeing practices which could be integrated into their everyday lives. The aim was to not only help students develop skills for their time at university but also to prepare them for the challenges of workplace life. With guidance from the School of Medicine, the Future Success Programme was devised as a short four-session course delivered in person and aimed at first year undergraduate students.

The programme started by introducing students to the Leicester Award which aims to provide students with transferable skills needed for their future career by helping to make them employable, self-aware and confident adults. Following sessions focused on topics of resilience, whole health and managing stress and burnout - to help students develop the necessary knowledge and practices needed to manage their mental health through tough situations.

All sessions were carried out by relevant professional services staff in a lecture format with interactive polls and surveys, as well as open discussion throughout. One of the challenges we faced was getting higher attendance for in-person events following the pandemic and more active engagement within sessions. The feedback from students reflected this as they reported finding the course content very insightful and enjoyable but wanted the sessions to be timetabled as part of their studies, more hands-on and conducted in a workshop style.

Following this feedback, we have since worked closely with the School of Biological Sciences on adapting the Future Success Programme into the new Study Well Programme. This course will be launching in the new academic year as a timetabled series of workshops for all first-year students. The focus of the course will be to build a sense of belonging and community among students, alongside embedding resilience and employability skills.

Workshop facilitation will be carried out by trained staff, and second and final year students. For our student wellbeing ambassadors this will be an opportunity to share their own experiences of university life with new students; as well as gaining paid work experience and a reference at the end of the course, which will outline both the leadership and soft skills learnt throughout the process.

We will measure the success of the programme by setting goals for the students at the beginning of the course and then assessing the progress made throughout by checking the students’ growing understanding of the topic areas and the skills learnt. After each session, we will also hold a mixed face-to-face focus group for both students and staff from across all degree programmes. These sessions will aim to gather feedback on how students feel the sessions are going and if they feel the objectives are being met. At the end of the course, students will be asked to write a paragraph to their future selves as a reminder of what they have learnt and how they will use those skills. These paragraphs will then be sent to the students at the end of their first year.

The ULSB Student Support Team will offer continued support after the course is finished by holding weekly informal drop-in sessions, where students can ask questions regarding any worries or concerns they may have. The team will also work closely with other colleagues to hold revision sessions before each exam period on time management, revision techniques, mindfulness and a number of other topics.



Understanding minimalism consumption and social inequality



Dr Wei-Fen Chen
Lecturer in Marketing

Scholars in the fields of humanities and social sciences have always strived to understand the means by which social inequality in the contemporary society is reproduced. As Richard Hoggart said, ‘*Class distinctions do not die. They merely learn new ways of expressing themselves*’. In line with this, Dr Wei-Fen Chen’s research conducted in collaboration with her colleague Dr Jingshi Liu from the City, University of London, aims to understand whether minimalism as an emerging consumer culture could be a field where inequality is reproduced.

Minimalism has become a trendy theme in lifestyle marketing, evidenced by the best-selling books (e.g. Marie Kondo’s The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up) and shows featuring celebrity minimalists (e.g. Minimalist: Less is Now). Despite the potential of minimalism to tackle the unsustainable capitalist system, it has often been commodified as a marketing appeal that is meant to sell. While it is clear that minimalism informs brand positioning (e.g. Patagonia, Muji), little is known about whether and when such positioning is effective, and its potential downstream consequences at the individual and societal levels remain under-researched.

Although minimalism could be associated with having few possessions, simple designs, and mindful selection of possessions, this project focuses on the aspect of having few possessions (i.e. less is more; such as Patagonia’s ‘Buy Less’ campaign) because, arguably, such brand positioning has the potential to reduce overconsumption and promote sustainability. Specifically, Dr Chen’s and Dr Liu’s work examines whether such minimalist positioning is more appealing to consumers with high or low socioeconomic status (SES) and traces the effect to different quality-quantity preferences. Extant literature on food consumption suggests that high SES consumers tend to exhibit a taste that values quality over quantity, while the opposite is true for low SES consumers. According to Dr Chen and Dr Liu, such quality-quantity preference might be developed into a heuristic that varies across consumers of different SES and, hence, influences attitudes in situations that do not necessarily involve actual quality-quantity trade-offs. Specifically, minimalist appeals may be more attractive to high SES consumers because of their implication of quality is congruent with their perceived quality-quantity preference. Preliminary results of three studies support these hypotheses that when consumer perceive themselves as having high rather than low SES, they find a minimalist brand more appealing, especially when they perceive quality-quantity as a trade-off.

Leveraging these preliminary results, Dr Chen’s and Dr Liu’s project aims to further explore whether minimalism could be a new avenue to signal status and distinction, so that consumption practices of minimalism may reproduce social inequalities. Concurrently, the study investigates minimalist marketing strategies that could resonate among low SES consumers. Aiming to promote a sustainable lifestyle for consumers of different SES backgrounds, this project is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals 10-Reduced Inequalities and 12-Responsible Consumption and Production.



Conducting interviews and observations in the field

Learning from Takeo Province’s Disaster Management



Denise Corsel
Doctoral Student in Management

One of the University of Leicester’s PhD candidates, Denise Corsel, continues her research into disaster management and sustainable development in Cambodia with the support of her PhD supervisors, Dr Nibedita Ray-Bennett and Professor Peter Jackson. Denise has been studying and undertaking ethnographic research to understand the impacts, both positive and negative, of floods on the lives and livelihoods in Takeo Province, Cambodia.

Worldwide hazards, especially floods, are increasing in severity and frequency due to climate change. Floods are generally associated with negative impacts, which are well documented in terms of economic loss, loss of lives, livelihoods, and impact on health. In contrast, there is limited research that documents the positive impacts of floods on lives and livelihoods.

Therefore, Denise’s PhD research and thesis aims to do so by bringing in-depth information from Takeo by using a three-phased mixed methods approach. Takeo was selected as a unique case study for this research because Takeo is flood-prone and its citizens have adapted their lives and livelihoods (particularly fishing and agriculture) to reap the benefits of annual flooding. As such, Takeo is an important area of research to understand how floods contribute to sustainable livelihoods. Some of the flood benefits involve fertile soil, water supply, fish spawning/migration, growth of crops, ecological benefits for forests, and food security.

Throughout Denise’s research, the Sustainable Development Goals 3, 11 and 13 are especially at the forefront. Goal 3 highlights the importance of ensuring good health and well-being, whereas goal 11 focuses on making communities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and goal 13 urges combatting climate change, including disasters and their impacts. These goals, along with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, underpin this research study. The Sendai Framework, adopted by 187 countries in the year 2015, advocates the substantial reduction of the negative impacts of disasters, specifically through its targets two and three to reduce ‘the number of people affected’ and ‘direct disaster economic loss’. Additionally, this framework places health, livelihoods and development as a focal point as to why it is critical to reduce disaster risk.





Living with Floods

Denise is using the Sendai Framework and the SDG Goals to focus on the nexus between flood management and sustainable development, and she aims to generate new knowledge and contribute towards existing theories on risk, disaster, development and resilience. This, in turn, has the potential to inform policy and practice within Cambodia, once she has completed her research, in September 2023. Moreover, Denise is identifying the adaptive livelihood strategies and the different roles that are required to strengthen resilience to annual flooding, at local level, within a developing country. This is being done by studying Takeo's communities, households and support systems, to draw lessons that can be learnt and generalised for other similar regions in Cambodia, and beyond.



Investigating international trade and forced labour



Professor Matthias Dahm
Professor of Economics

Professor Dahm's most recent work focuses on investigating the link between trade liberalisation and forced labour. In collaboration with colleagues from the University of Nottingham, his project which is part of a BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant has led to a theoretical framework predicting that the net effect of trade on the use of forced labour depends on which sectors improve their relative terms of trade: (i) If forced-labour-intensive goods improve their relative terms of trade, then the use of cheap forced labour increases (forced labour demand channel); (ii) if free-labour-intensive goods improve their relative terms of trade, then the prevalence of forced labour decreases (free labour demand channel). Similarly, if openness to trade triggers anti-forced labour policies in the country (policy channel) or by trade partners (supply chains channel), then the prevalence of forced labour also decreases. These countervailing forces are consistent, on the one hand, with calls for import prohibitions on products made using forced labour and, on the other hand, with the hope that trade opportunities induce economic progress.

Complementing the theoretical framework, Professor Dahm's and his co-authors' empirical analysis provides causal evidence on these countervailing forces in a cross-country setting through an instrumental variable approach. After accounting for the relation between trade and income and institutions, there is cross-country evidence for the forced labour demand channel: an increase in a country's openness raises the use of forced labour. Moreover, the study shows that the forced labour demand channel is only present in trade with non-OECD countries, and supply chain transparency measures of developed countries decrease the use of forced labour. Professor Dahm's and colleagues' theoretical and empirical insights make a significant contribution to global debates on globalisation, international trade and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8- Decent work and economic growth and SDG 10- Reduced inequalities. Through their work, they also contribute to ILO conventions and actions on forced labour, and domestic level legal developments designed to combat forced labour and modern slavery.

Professor Dahm's and colleagues' theoretical and empirical insights make a significant contribution to global debates on globalisation, international trade and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Supporting UK SMEs sustainability and resilience post pandemic



Professor Mohamed Shaban
Professor of Finance and FinTech

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit national and local economies with unprecedented force. As often happens with the majority of crises, the most vulnerable parts of the economy are also the worst affected. By focusing on UK SMEs, Professor Shaban’s current project aims to uncover the challenges and opportunities that these businesses are facing in terms of productivity, access to finance, readiness to net zero and lack of managerial skills. The project seeks to generate multiple world-class research output that will help SMEs and policymakers to understand SMEs’ resilience and survivability in a rapid changing environment. Within this context, Professor Shaban is also working on establishing two new research groups with the aim to address current issues of concern for SMEs and Fintech ecospheres.

The first group, SMEs Finance Sustainability and Resilience will conduct research and engage in KTP and KE activities with local SMEs. The research areas of this first group include productivity, survivability, resilience, innovation, sustainability, and readiness for net zero. The second group, namely FINTECH Green and Inclusive Finance, aims to conduct research on Fintech, financial inclusion, green finance and the value of climate friendly business activities.

Co-founder and president of the UK Efficiency and Productivity Analysis Network (UKEPAN) and coordinator of EURO Efficiency working group, Professor Shaban is also the Vice President of the International Finance and Banking Society, a leading research network that aims to bridge knowledge between academics, practitioners, and policymakers. IFABS was established in 2008 at ULSB as a response to the turbulence caused by the financial crisis at the time. Now IFABS has more than 6500 members (academia, industry and international financial institutions) in more than 65 countries around the world. The IFABS major events aim to address current issues of great importance to the financial, economic and business development. The IFABS ethos are built on inclusivity, equality, sustainability, and improvement of education quality worldwide. Since its inception, the IFABS made its mission to support academics and early career researchers from less-developed countries around the world by providing financial support to facilitate them attending one of the world’s prestigious congregations in finance and banking.



Professor Shaban’s current project aims to uncover the challenges and opportunities that UK SMEs are facing in terms of productivity, access to finance, readiness to net zero and lack of managerial skills.

Examining inequality in the UK business landscape



Dr Tim Obermeier
Lecturer in Economics

There have been some dramatic changes in the business landscape in American firms over the last four decades that have been extensively documented by researchers and are the subject of much public debate. In broad terms, one could summarise many of these trends by saying that firm inequality has increased – companies are looking increasingly different in terms of their productivity, wages, mark-ups and size. These changes have been accompanied by several worrying trends such as declining productivity growth, stagnating real wages (especially for low-educated workers), rising mark-ups, a falling share of labour in GDP and declining business dynamism (e.g. the share of workers in young firms has declined).

Dr Obermeier’s research (together with Professor John Van Reenen and Professor Jan de Loecker) examines whether these trends have also occurred in Britain. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, such developments can have important implications for overall UK inequality.

To give some examples: (i) rising dispersion in firms’ productivity translates into increasing wage inequality between those employed in high- versus low-productivity companies; (ii) a lower labour share means falling pay or jobs for a given level of GDP, as well as higher household inequality (as capital income is more unequally distributed than labour income); and (iii) rising mark-ups imply higher prices for a given level of marginal costs (or that less of any fall in costs gets passed on to consumers), reducing living standards.

A second reason for studying UK business trends is to help assess the explanations of such economic shifts. If the trends are just US-specific, then this suggests that American institutions are more likely explanations than global factors such as technology or trade that broadly affect all countries. While several papers take an international approach to these trends, or have studied a particular economy, there have been few ‘deep dives’ into what the UK experience has been like and that cover a wide range of business sector outcomes.

Using Historical Orbis, which is a relatively new panel of the population of incorporated firms since the mid-1990s, Professor De Loecker, Professor Van Reenen and Dr Obermeier have found that almost all of the US trends are present in the British data. In particular, they have documented at the micro level increasing between-firm differences in productivity, wages, size and mark-ups, similar to those in America. Generally, these changes appear to be stronger in the top half of the distribution, with a widening of the upper tail as ‘superstar’ firms pull away from the rest of the pack. Similarly, at the macro level, the UK has experienced a rise in aggregate mark-ups (like the US), slower growth in productivity and wages since the Global Financial Crisis (more dramatically than in the US), and a fall in the wage share of GDP since 1980 (much less stark than in the US).



Part III: Future UN PRME Commitments

For the next two years, the University of Leicester School of Business has developed a plan to address some of the most important challenges that affect our University, the local community and society at large. As part of this plan, the School has committed to work on the following goals:



Gender Equality

- After the submission of the Athena Swan application for the Bronze Award, in the coming months, the School will begin to implement the action plan under the directions of the Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the newly established EDI Committee. Through this plan, ULSB commits to work towards a more equitable working environment by investing in women's career development and promotion;
- In line with this goal, ULSB will continue to support the activities of the two ULSB women-led outreach groups: Women in Economics, Finance and Accounting; and, the Women's Inspiration Network and will encourage more members of staff across the School to take part in the Women Leading with Purpose programme, with the aim of empowering women, broadening their opportunities and raising their profile inside and outside the School.



Reducing Inequalities

- Following the success of this year's Race Inequities and Race Award Gap Workshop and the Black Excellence Symposium, the School will continue to increase awareness and celebrate cultural diversity by creating an annual EDI event calendar covering several themes (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, etc.) and investing in the EDI focused networks that are part of the School. In addition to WEFA and WIN, mentioned above, the School will work alongside the ULSB Black Excellence group to reduce the awarding, attainment and satisfaction gaps of Black students and the Early Career Researchers group to support the professional development of early career staff members.
- As a means to reduce inequalities amongst students across the School, in the next two years ULSB pledges to work with the Black Excellence group on a report aimed to understand the various challenges affecting students that belong to different ethnic backgrounds. The results of the study will help the School to identify current strengths as well as areas for further development leading to the design of a specific action plan.



Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

- ULSB has registered its interest in the University of Leicester's 'Welcome an Academic and Student At-Risk' initiative aimed at helping Ukrainian academics and students fleeing the conflict. Through this initiative, the university will offer places on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and host researchers for a period of time, both at the postgraduate and academic level. The matching scheme is organised through 'Citizens UK', in conjunction with the Refugee Education UK (REUK).



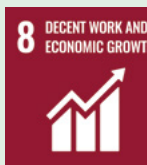
Good Health and Wellbeing

- In the last few years with the pandemic disrupting students' studies and personal life, we have observed a steady decrease in mental health wellbeing and life satisfaction. Students feel under prepared for academic life and struggle to adjust to the demands of the new environment. To address these issues, the School is preparing to launch a programme called 'Study Well' in 2022/23. This programme is being designed with the goal of improving students' health and wellbeing, building a stronger sense of community, improving engagement and equipping students with soft skills that will make them more resilient as they enter university life.



Climate Action

- As part of the University Partnership Agreement, the University of Leicester has pledged to work alongside the other universities in the region to drive economic growth by helping local businesses to address the challenges brought by the pandemic and climate change. In this context, ULSB is in the process of establishing two new research groups, SMEs Finance Sustainability and Resilience and FINTECH Green and Inclusive Finance, which, alongside the already established Responsible Business Research Cluster, will lead the School research agenda in response to climate change.
- In the next year, ULSB is also committing to develop a Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP). This plan is part of the wider University commitment to environmental sustainability and working towards net zero carbon emissions. LEAP will help the School to identify a clear set of targets across five core areas (Energy, Travel, Purchasing and Resource Consumption, Curriculum and Research and Advocacy) and to monitor environmental performance in subsequent years.



Decent Work and Economic Growth and Industry and Innovation Infrastructure

- The Help to Grow programme delivered by the University of Leicester School of Business, as a Small Business Charter accredited business school, will continue throughout 2022 and until 2025. The programme, which is well aligned with the recently signed University Partnership Agreement, will support the development of UK SMEs by offering business leaders high quality education, with a focus on innovation, productivity and sustainability. By providing managers with the skills needed to build resilient businesses, the programme will contribute to drive economic growth whilst strengthening the socio-economic infrastructure of the region.



Quality Education

- In order to support the School's pledge towards responsible education and contribute to the Local Environmental Action Plan, ULSB will set up a Sustainability Committee and appoint departmental Sustainability and Business Engagement Coordinators and Sustainability Student Ambassadors. Together with the Sustainability Lead, the LEAP Director, the Dean of the School and representatives from the Social Impact Team and Operations, the members of the new committee will monitor the School's sustainability activities and will collect data from relevant stakeholders (students, staff and partners) to inform the ULSB Sustainability strategy/LEAP and the SIP.
- The School will offer four Sanctuary scholarships a year to refugees and asylum seekers at postgraduate level. The scholarships consist of a tuition fee waiver and contribute to reduce the barriers to participation in higher education faced by those seeking asylum in the UK.





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PRME Principles for Responsible
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