

# AGSM Global Network Week June 2023

## Business for Social Impact and Sustainable Development

### Course coordinator & facilitator

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### Course summary

The post-pandemic world is reinforcing calls for a renewed 'social contract' between business and society, with stronger demands on (business) organizations for responsibility, accountability, purpose, and social impact from a diverse and increasingly complex range of stakeholders.

Effective leaders in the private, public, and non-profit sectors will need to navigate a new set of intra- and inter-organizational relations and tensions. They must respond to novel societal challenges and embrace new ways of organizing to deliver on their value proposition. This includes the emergence of innovative organizational forms and institutional arrangements, such as in cross-sector collaboration.

This course will explore the changing understandings of socially responsible, sustainable, and impact-driven (business) organizations as well as the management strategies and managerial skillset essential to successfully lead towards social impact and sustainable development.

### Content overview

In this GNW course, we will cover different levels of analysis that will help you to develop deep(er) insights into a broad range of topics linked to social impact and sustainable development in business contexts.

1. *Managers in organizations*: Leading your organization informed by new ways of thinking about responsibility, accountability, purpose, social impact, and sustainable business development
  - 'Grand challenges' and 'wicked problems' on the societal level as a quest for managers?
  - Responsibility and accountability for social and societal consequences of management (across all sectors)
  - Identify institutional 'logics for action' that underpin managerial, organizational, and sectoral understandings of innovation and (social) impact
  - Managing upwards: Develop an in-depth understanding of board-level concerns with leading for impact – and approaches on how to successfully navigate them

- Opportunities for 'cultural' and 'institutional entrepreneurship'
2. *Organizations and organizational forms*: Developing and extending your understanding of processes of social value creation, capture, and distribution across different organizational forms
    - Learn about new organizational forms and business models for social innovation and sustainable business development
    - Explore approaches to managing and scaling 'hybrid' and purpose-driven organizational forms, such as in social enterprises
    - Discover the multiple frameworks available for measuring organizational-level social impact
    - Examine the emerging global market for 'impact investing'
  3. *Organizations in institutional environments*: Analysing your organization's embeddedness in global and field-level institutional environments
    - Conceptualize markets and industries as 'fields', and position your organisation within these
    - Map relationships and network-structures
    - Understand macro-level influences on both fields and organizations, including mechanisms of 'glocalization'
    - Explore issues of field-level governance
  4. *Inter-organizational and cross-sector collaboration*: Identifying templates for building inter-organizational and/or cross-sector collaboration to maximize social impact and sustainable development of your organization
    - Cultivate institutional infrastructure for inter-organizational and/or cross-sector collaboration, including via digital platforms
    - Explore how to successfully navigate institutional plurality and complexity in inter-organizational and/or cross-sector collaboration
    - Sustain collaborative efforts to secure social and institutional change, including 'robust action' and resilience

### **Format of course delivery**

Monday through Thursday of the GNW, we will cover one aspect of the content (as above) per day. The course delivery will feature (a) some moderate daily preparation work on your side; (b) guest talks by, and/or panel debates with, practitioners and experts in the respective topic area; (c) site visits and case studies; as well as (d) conceptual input from the course facilitator; we will end each day with (e) a discussion and debriefing session.

On Friday, student groups will share their collective learnings, insights, and practical takeaways from the course (see below for details on student group project and final presentation); you will need to schedule in some time for self-led group meetings throughout the week; the course facilitator is available for on-site group coaching sessions as required.



## Student group project and final presentation

We will form groups of ca. 5 students in the first session (details to be communicated). In your group project, you will share your collective learnings, insights, and practical take-aways from the course and illustrate it with a real-world case study (your own organization, a case well documented in the media/literature, etc.).

*Task:* Based on one or several of the four modules, choose a theoretical lens or concept(s) most interesting/attractive to you to understand an empirical issue (the best way to do this is to use our daily discussions and debriefings as a point of departure). Conduct an empirical analysis using primary and/or secondary data (as appropriate) to investigate a particular organization or industry. End with a critical evaluation, recommendations, and/or implications linking your case back to the overall theme of the course. To share your findings with the class, consider the following guiding questions (in addition to your own focus):

- What is the empirical problem in your case? What is the conceptual issue?
- How does your chosen theoretical lens or concept(s) reveal aspects that otherwise would remain hidden or overlooked?
- How does the case and your analysis better inform our understanding of social impact and sustainable development in a business context?

*Deliverable:* Prepare a 'poster presentation' of max. 5 slides (or other visual aids) for a 10 minutes presentation in class. Each group will have a time budget of 20 minutes in total; one other group is assigned as a discussant (brief verbal feedback and questions); the rest of the class will provide feedback; if time permits, we will choose selected questions for a brief Q&A.

