



Symposium Servant-Leadership Across Histories

Wednesday, 26 April 2012, 13.30-18.00 p.m.
Auditorium, Main Building, First Floor
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Now, more than ever, a leader's capacity to both direct an organization and its people, while at the same time work in their service, is being recognized as a vital capacity for creating a sustainable organization. Servant-leadership is a leadership principle embedded in a way of life, which has been recognized and expounded upon in all parts of the world throughout history, and across all cultures. The recent economic crisis again reminds us of its importance as an antidote to the selfish and bonus-oriented behaviours we have witnessed and the economic/societal consequences we have seen.

At its simplest, servant-leadership is driven by the motivation of *enabling others* to work more effectively and successfully. Servant-leadership thus means leading a group or organization in the service of people, be they clients, customers, employees, partners, colleagues and/or members of your network. Integrating both head and heart, servant-leadership does not stop there. It expands as a principle to serve the community and act as a steward of the environment and all that inhabit it. Culturally speaking there are different ways of realizing this aspiration.

As the 21st century progresses it is clear that leaders in all areas of society are faced with increasingly complex challenges. At the personal, professional and societal level, leadership requires listening to the needs of the other to bridge different meanings and visions and create solutions which are beneficial to all. Historical awareness of where the other (follower, leader, student, friend, etc.) comes from helps to better understand the needs of today and tomorrow. If you do not take the past in consideration with empathy, you cannot understand and take responsibility for the future. When vitalizing the cultural identity of any organization e.g. Shell, Akzo Nobel, Tata or the VU, understanding its history is key. This calls for a compassionate kind of leader, a leader who is able to live the brand and reconcile short time immediate goals (quick solutions) and creating long term thoughtful reflections in the 21st C workplace.

The symposium *Servant-Leadership across Histories* aims to explore some of the above questions, comparing cases of servant-leadership practices across histories. Using a cross-cultural approach we wish to serve the learning and career needs of future generations of professionals in the 21st C world. For this symposium, we are delighted that we have found international experts willing to present their insights about challenges of servant-leadership and nurturing careers and talents in virtual organizations. For SLCRE, it is a next step from passion to action.

On behalf of the organizing team,

prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars & dr. Sylvia van de Bunt-Kokhuis
Chairpersons of symposium and SLCRE directors



Programme

- 13.30 'Meet and Greet' in Foyer. Registration-desk near Auditorium.
- 14.00 *Welcome* in Auditorium by **prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars** and **dr. Sylvia van de Bunt-Kokhuis**, co-directors SLCRE.
- 14.15 *Portrait of dr. Johan Ferrier (1910-2010, www.johanferrierfonds.nl), first president of Suriname and servant to the Surinam communities across cultures*, by **Joan Ferrier**, director of E-Quality, www.e-quality.nl.
- 14.45 Transfer to workshop rooms in BelleVUe building.
- 15.00 Servant-leadership across Histories will be highlighted from different perspectives by the following dedicated workshop leaders:
- WORKSHOP 1 (Room TBA): *Intercultural dialogue across histories; case study on Eastern Europe*, by **Joke van der Leeuw-Roord**, Executive Director EUROCLIO, European Association of History Educators, www.euroclio.eu .
- WORKSHOP II (Room TBA): *Documentary on life and work of dr George Puchinger (1921-1999) first director of the Historical Documentation Centre for Dutch Protestantism (HDC, <http://hdc.vu.nl>)*, by **prof. dr. George Harinck**, VU Chair in history of neo-calvinism and director of HDC.
- WORKSHOP III (Room TBA): *Life and work of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)*, by **drs. Ir. Ria Stoop-Quist**, former lecturer Mathematics at Technical University of Delft.
- WORKSHOP IV (Room TBA): *'Dutch leadership in business and politics in the 20st century; servant-leadership and the benefits of historical awareness'*, by **Ronald Kroeze**, MA, PhD Candidate and Lecturer, History Department, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and **Sjoerd Keulen**, MA, PhD Candidate, History Department, Universiteit van Amsterdam.
- WORKSHOP V (Room TBA): *From artist-as-leader to leader-as-artist. The Dutch Beat poet and performer Simon Vinkenoog as example of leadership in contemporary organizations*, by **dr. Vincent Pieterse**, Program Director De Baak Management Centre.
- 16.10 COFFEE & TEA BREAK in Foyer near Auditorium
- 16.45 *The history of Tata leadership in India (title to be confirmed)* by **Vasudevan Rajagopalan**, Regional HR Manager – Benelux, Tata Consultancy Services.
- 17.10 *Panel meeting of minds and hearts. How to connect past, present and future and how to learn from each other?* Kick-off presentation by dr Bram Boxhoorn, director of the Atlantische Commissie in The Hague (www.atlantischecommissie.nl), on 'institutional (servant-) leadership in an historical perspective' followed by a panel discussion with students, workshop leaders and the audience.
- 17.50 Closure and review of the day's event *VU and its historical identity; a call for servant-leadership*, by **prof. dr. George Harinck**.
- 18.00 Refreshments in Foyer