

## **Academic Conference on “New economy and purpose-driven companies” November 2018 Call for Papers**

Thanks to the support of IDRC and several universities, Academia B is inviting researchers and students to present the results and/or the progress of their research on purpose-driven companies and its impact in the emergence of a new economy at the first "Global Academic Conference of the B Corps Movement", to be held on November 13, 2018, in Puerto Varas, Chile.

The Conference will take place within the next Encuentro+B, an event that brings together B Corps, their partners and the B Community in Latin America, including academics.

We are especially interested in research, either quantitative or qualitative, that examines theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects of the new economy and purpose-driven companies, regarding the solution to global problems.

In addition, to presenting ground-breaking research, the Academic Conference will provide opportunities for researchers to discuss data sources and methods for studying purpose-driven companies, provide feedback on their research in progress, and allow the academic community to develop a roadmap of current and future research opportunities.

Theoretical, empirical, experimental, and case study research contributions are welcome. All contributions should clearly address the practical and theoretical implications of the research reported.

The Conferences will be organized by the following topics:

- Impact measurement
- Inclusion of youth and women
- Climate change and environmental challenges: life regenerating companies
- New economy as a social movement
- Management challenges for purpose-driven companies
- Legal and institutional frameworks: Shared Benefit Corporations

## Purpose-Driven Companies Special Issue:

As part of the conference, a forthcoming Special Issue on “New economy and purpose-driven companies” will be published by the journal “*Academia - Revista Latinoamericana de Administración*” (ARLA), which is a journal published by Emerald Group Publishing. ARLA is CLADEA’s (Latin American Council of Schools of Management) international journal and is ranked within the three top Journals in Business and Management from Iberoamerica according to the 2014-2017 Thomson’s Journal Citation Reports.

All papers accepted for presentation at the conference will be considered for the special issue. Papers will be reviewed and a final decision will be conveyed to submitting authors by March 2019.

Guest Editors: Mauricio G. Villena, Academia Associate Editor (Public Management) and Verónica Devenin, Academic Conference Organizer.

### Application requirements:

- Submit your abstract\* (up to 300 words) via our [Google Form \(tinyurl.com/ConferenceB\)](https://tinyurl.com/ConferenceB)

\*The abstract must show with clarity the objective, method, main results and conclusions of the research. If it is an ongoing research, you must mention its status and present its preliminary results.

Once accepted, researchers must send their papers to [academiab@sistemab.org](mailto:academiab@sistemab.org):

- Title page (title and authors information)
- Paper (maximum of 8000 words in length. This includes all text including references and appendices. No authors information included.)



\*Tickets and economic support options available from May 15th on

[academiab.org/conference](https://academiab.org/conference)



### Dates and deadlines

May 15, 2018:  
deadline for  
submitting the  
abstract

June 30, 2018:  
deadline to inform  
the accepted  
proposals

October 30, 2018:  
deadline for  
submitting the full  
paper

November 13,  
2018: Global  
Academic  
Conference

## Topics and coordinators

### Management challenges for purpose-driven companies.

**Wendy Stubbs, Monash University, Australia**

The increasing scale and scope of global environmental and social problems, such as climate change, environmental degradation, persistent poverty and increasing social inequality, pose challenges to business operations and threaten companies' social license to operate. In addition, recent corporate scandals and social and environmental disasters (such as the BP oil spill and Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh) have severely undermined society's trust in business. As a result, fierce debates on the broader role of companies within society are emerging from business and academia.

This has led to calls for purpose-driven companies. BlackRock's CEO, Larry Fink, recently argued that society is demanding that companies serve a social purpose. Every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution to society. By coupling purpose directly with positive societal outcomes, purpose-driven companies derive profits from delivering products and services that address global problems and promote the "common good". Purpose-driven companies proactively contribute to societal wellbeing in order to positively transform society.

In this session, contributors will address the management challenges for purpose-driven companies (PDC). How do PDCs articulate purpose and implement it over time? How can a clear purpose that includes the common good be incorporated into business structures, strategies and practices? What tensions arise from managing profit and purpose? How do PDCs manage these tensions? How can PDCs gain support and foster collaboration among internal and external stakeholders? How can PDCs spread their influence and effect and scale their operations?

## Impact measurement.

**Juliana Rodrigues and Professor Graziella Comini,  
University of São Paulo, Brazil**

Impact measurement and clear outreach of findings are some of the essential characteristics that distinguish traditional businesses from those which are also aimed at generating social and environmental value (Battilana & Lee 2014; Grimes 2010) and, therefore, are among the main discussed when it comes to the evolution of these business models (Barki et al. 2015; Reisman & Olazabal 2016). However, as an emerging and still developing field, the lack of consensus and the vast array of approaches to impact measurement are still major challenges (Rawhouser et al. 2017; Reisman & Olazabal 2016). In order to further develop the work on impact measurement and assessment, it is important to address the complex and multiple aspects involved, while taking into account different methods that complement each other and making use of existing tools, among other actions.

One of the main objectives of this year's congress topic is to add valuable input to the discussion about different impact measurement and assessment approaches, and contribute to the academic and practical development of this matter. With respect to measurement, the mechanisms used by B Corps to assess impact and communicate a purposeful company identity have stood out as a successful toolkit that can be used together with other proposals. This is, therefore, a call for submissions for research works aimed at both B Corps and other organization models, which may include different viewpoints on social impact, assessment objectives and measurement methods. Theoretical and/or empirical works, of both quantitative and/or qualitative methodologies, either complete or in progress, will be accepted.

What is the use of social impact metrics? What are the mechanisms and methods used to assess and measure social impact? How have these methods worked? What are the benefits and limitations of adopting them? What are the uses, characteristics and fields of application of social impact assessment? What are the lessons learned during the process of planning, implementing and/or analyzing social impact indicators? What are the consequences or decisions triggered by impact assessments? How does impact assessment support the building of an organizational identity and the relationship with stakeholders? Do metrics help improve the scale of impact? What are the normative, conceptual and methodological aspects of social impact assessment?

## **Inclusion of youth and women: Economic growth with inclusion and diversity for sustainable development**

**Karla Soria, Universidad Católica del Norte, Chile**

According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the rate of female participation in the workforce has stalled roughly around 53% and 78,1% of these women are employed in low-productivity sectors, as defined by ECLAC. This phenomenon replicates among the youth, in other words, they work in precarious, unstable, low-paid conditions with limited opportunities to gain experience that allows them to develop social mobility and ascend professionally and personally. In consequence, it's urgent that we create conscience on the need to generate economic sustainable growth and development, whereof women and young people are, without a doubt, the cornerstone to accomplish this goal.

In addition to this, for us interested in this topic we seek investigations that analyze the Inclusion of Women and Youth. Studies can be qualitative or quantitative, case studies, critical reviews and analysis. The target group are women and young people within organizations and/or enterprises, emphasising on B Corps. Studies must be focused mainly on the following subjects: labour insertion processes, new business generation, equal opportunities, corporate sector adequacy, compatibility between family and labor markets, labor flexibilization, corporate diversity and equality, women and/or youth business leadership, new business models oriented to inclusion of women and youth, among others.

## Climate change and environmental challenges: life regenerating companies

Vesna Mandakovic, Universidad del Desarrollo, Chile

Climate change is being felt globally. Recent events are a reminder that climate change is a wicked problem that needs decisive collaborative action and long-term commitment of governments, businesses and citizens alike.

Sustainable enterprises have emerged in the past decade to counteract the expansion and effects of modern sustainability problems, this by means of triple bottom line models. Despite the emphasis on environmental protection, this remains to be an anthropocentric approach relying on a fundamental dualism between human organizations and nature.

In recent years, we have witnessed the emergence of a new type of sustainable enterprise proposing a shift towards eco-centric decision-making and practices, namely: regenerative organizations. These are ecologically embedded profitable businesses, which seek to restore, and regenerate degraded ecosystems services, build resilience in, and improve the wellbeing of the communities relying on such services. B-corps in particular, see socioecological problems through the lens of opportunities, that instead of simply minimizing the negative effect of the traditional business practices, they develop innovative business solutions that effectively resolve some of wicked problems leading to or involved in climate change.

In this session, contributors are invited to propose and discuss a new research agenda around how regenerative organizations inform the growing debate on business-led climate action going beyond mitigation and adaptation. How do regenerative organization gain support among internal stakeholders? How can their practices be extended to other “traditional” sustainable organizations? What methodologies can be used to study decision making in regenerative organizations? How can organizations transit from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric perspective?

## New economy as a social movement

### Nelson Díaz, Universidad EAN, Colombia

As a recent HBS article points out, *“no one has all the levers to change organizations and society over night. But collectively we have all we need to do this over time”* (Straub, 2018). Social movements, increasingly original and active, have the potential to redefine the economic scenario in the region and the world, opening a historical process of transformation towards a new economy. Circular Economy, Sharing Economy, and particularly B Corps and the B Global Movement, are some of the social / business movements that are willing to change the way we see business and how sustainable value can be created. Following Straub, for-profit companies can be key players in these social movements to change the world.

Therefore, It is essential to understand the type of relationships established by companies with social movements, or how companies are constituting these social movements? Can them be understood as business movements? Some questions to consider in this topic are: what are the characteristics of these "business movements", how they have been constituted and acquired global relevance, what are the actors involved in this movement and how their relations and interactions reinforce this change as a social movement, what role do they have in the development of sustainable and purpose driven companies? In turn, the interaction of these business movements with other social movements, such as Human Rights or Sustainable Degrowth, are also relevant to this table.

## Legal and institutional frameworks: Shared Benefit Corporations Summer Brown, DePaul University, US

The harm that can flow from businesses pursuing profits above all else has become more obvious over the last decade. The global financial crisis, the Deep Horizon well disaster, and the factory collapse of Bangladesh all show the dangers of allowing businesses to focus on profit while ignoring externalities and potential risks. We are in the midst of a historical moment in which some of the core ideas of business, and of the law that governs it, is being reconsidered. What are corporations for? Do they owe responsibilities to stakeholders other than shareholders? To society in general? An article in the Harvard Business Review proclaimed that “there’s a growing body of evidence . . . that the companies that are most successful at maximizing shareholder value over time are those that aim toward goals other than maximizing shareholder value. Employees and customers often know more about and have more of a long-term commitment to a company than shareholders do.” What has emerged to address this desire for stakeholder value over shareholder value have been various new legal business organizations that carry with them many new legal questions.

In this session, contributors will address the legal challenges facing the implementation and regulation of the new business forms for purpose driven companies . Does the legal acknowledgment and protection by the state actor make much difference in the actions of the company? Are there ways that legal designation/registration can be made more impactful on the business? While purpose driven companies emerged as a positive response to negative societal events, are there unintended legal consequences to these developments? For example, how shall shareholders now measure purpose achievement? Will those assessments become grounds for liability? Who should be responsible for monitoring the continued achievement of their social purpose? Government actors or third party rating agencies like B Lab? Does the legal designation make negative behavior more likely among the non-purpose driven companies? What impact does the legal designation have on Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) Funds?