

Plenary Speech—Ockie Bosch (New Zealand)



Systems education – addressing the critical need for a New Way of Thinking in dealing with Complex issues facing our societies

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ABSTRACT

Government and business institutions are under pressure to make the right investment decisions in the face of a continually changing geo-political and socio-economic landscape. Policy makers, managers and leaders today are expected to deliver innovative solutions to cope with increasing change and uncertainty. To make matters more challenging the complex environmental, socio-economic, business-financial issues tend to transcend the jurisdictions and capacities of any single organization or Government department.

Systems thinking offers a holistic and integrative way of appreciating all the major dimensions of a complex problem, and enables the formation of effective management strategies (systemic interventions) with long lasting outcomes. This paper reports on Systems Education, one of the most important leverages to help current and create future managers and leaders to be equipped with new ways of thinking that are systems and design-led to deal with complex problems in a systemic, integrated and collaborative fashion.

Systems Education at Tertiary Level in which models that outline the nature of contents that is required for different types of students (from discipline specific to integration and systems science) are being used to design courses and their modes of delivery. How these systems programs are infiltrated and embedded into existing degree programs are being illustrated. The effectiveness of different course designs and modes of delivery in instilling graduate attributes that employers want are evaluated. Of particular importance is to examine how systems and educational scholars and practitioners can serve sustainability, resilience and social responsibility in business. Examples are given of how multi-dimensional Masters programs are viewed and designed as “systems” rather than programs (simply a collection of modules or courses). Such a systems perspective acknowledges that one module will be limited in terms of what it enables the students to see, but a programme that is informed by systems thinking facilitates, through its design, the students’ ability to learn by reflecting on the links between the parts (interconnected thinking) in order to better understand multi-dimensional issues and multiple interpretations of the many complex issues facing our societies.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Appointed on invitation as Editor-in-Chief of Systems Journal (1 April 2016 - present)

Appointed as Distinguished Guest Professor, Keio University, Japan. (Postgraduate training

and corporate courses (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017) (2015 - present)

President Elect of the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS) (2015/16)

President of the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS) (2016/17)

Fellow of Systemic Excellence Group, Berlin, Germany with special responsibilities in Systems Modeling (February 2015 – present)

Co-Research Partner of the Malik Management Institute, Saint Gallen, Switzerland (June 2016 – present)

Academician of the prestigious International Academy for Cybernetics and System Sciences (2010 – present)

Vice-President of the International Academy for Cybernetics and Systems Sciences (1 Jan 2016 - present)

Member (2009 – 2016) and Chair (2016/17) of the Board of Directors of the ISSS;

Member of the Scientific Board of the Business Systems Laboratory, Italy (2009 – present)