

Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Good Health and Well-Being

FAMILY BUSINESSES ON A MISSION



Series Editors:

Naomi Birdthistle
Rob Hales

The Family Businesses on Mission series examines how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) can be applied in family businesses around the world, providing insights into cultural and societal differences and displaying innovative approaches to complex environmental and societal issues.

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Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Good Health and Well-Being

EDITED BY

NAOMI BIRDTHISTLE

Griffith University, Australia

AND

ROB HALES

Griffith University, Australia



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About the Editors

Professor Naomi Birdthistle has entrepreneurship and family business running through her veins. She tried to work in her family business when she was four but was told she was too small. She came back year after year asking to work and eventually her grandmother capitulated and left her work in the family business when she was seven. After years of working in the family business part-time and having completed her studies at Stirling University, Babson College, Harvard University and the University of Limerick, Naomi established her own consulting business, consulting family businesses in her hometown. She is now a Professor of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation at Griffith University, teaching future family business leaders and researching family business issues as well. Naomi is an award-winning academic having received numerous awards for her teaching and her research.

Associate Professor Rob Hales is the discipline leader for Sustainable Business and Management in the Department of Business Strategy and Innovation. His research interests focus on the governance issues around the grand challenges of our time. Furthermore, his research focuses on SDGs in business and government, a business case for climate change, climate change policy, carbon management, sustainable tourism and working with First Peoples on consent processes and climate change. He was the first programme director of Griffith University's Master of Global Development. He teaches in the Department of Business Strategy and Innovation and has convened master's level courses such as Leadership for Sustainable Business, Research Methods for Policy Makers and Sustainability and Systems Thinking. He supervises PhD students in the areas of collaborative governance, sustainability transitions and climate change.

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About the Contributors

Alejandro (Alec) Delaney is Argentina-born. He has a Doctorate in Business administration, an MBA, and is a veterinarian (DVM). He has over 35 years of experience in International Business and has lived and worked in several countries and cities, including Hong Kong, Mexico, Buenos Aires and Miami. He is also an investor in biotechnological projects, a livestock producer and a Professor of International Negotiation at Florida International University (FIU).

Josephine Igoe is a Lecturer in the areas of International Business Strategy and Entrepreneurship at University of Galway, Ireland. She has won several best-paper awards and publishes and supervises PhD students in these areas.

Filzah Md Isa is currently an Associate Professor at the Taylors University Lakeside Campus Malaysia. She has teaching experience of almost 30 years, both in public and private universities. She has published numerous papers and has been involved in several professional bodies. She participated in many research projects in and with other universities, government ministries and agencies. She was chosen as the 1st runner-up for the Best Entrepreneurship Mentor/Coach for Academia of Malaysia by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in December 2015. At present she is involved in the Active Ageing and Digital Economy and Business Transformation hubs at the university to produce talents, research projects, papers and networks to establish these hubs as one of the attributes of the university's success in the global market.

Deborah Mireles recently graduated from University of Galway with a PhD in Management funded by the Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholarship Programme. Her research has won several awards and her dissertation on Multinational Subsidiary Management Behaviour was runner-up for the prestigious Pavlos Dimitratos Dissertation Award.

Shaista Noor did her PhD in Business from Taylor's University Malaysia and was the recipient of Taylor's Excellence Research Award. Her research interest includes women's entrepreneurship, commercialisation, leadership, management, ageing, HEIs and SDGs. She has published numerous papers in renowned journals. She is associated with the World Association of Sustainable Development (WASD) United Kingdom, London as a Country Coordinator (PAKISTAN). She is an International Mentor for the Commonwealth Women's Leadership

Program 2023 of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. She is currently associated with Teesside University, UK.

Rachel Perkins Department of Business Strategy and Innovation, Griffith Business School, Griffith University. Rachel Perkins has a PhD in regional tourism business development in the context of destination management. She is a Lecturer at the Griffith Business School at Griffith University and currently teaches courses that focus on start-up development, sustainable and innovative business management and small business development. Rachel grew up in the small country town of Stanthorpe, in QLD Australia, where she was able to observe the originality that came from small business and became interested in pursuing this focus in her research career. Rachel has received awards at domestic and international conferences and from other institutions for her research.

Markus Pilmayer is a Professor of Destination Management and Destination Development at the Department of Tourism at the Munich University of Applied Sciences. His research focuses on spatial development which he has explored in several contexts including citizen participation, health and sustainability. In the context of his PhD – funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) – he dealt with internationalisation processes of the tourism industry in the Arab World. He can draw on many years of experience in the international tourism industry and tourism policy, which also benefits him in the context of his scientific activities. In addition, he is a fellow of various scientific associations such as IGU (International Geographic Union) or the DGT (German Association for Tourism Research), the latter he serves on the board.

Nicolai Scherle is a Professor for Intercultural Management and Diversity at the Hochschule für Oekonomie & Management (FOM) in Munich. His research interests are mainly in the areas of economic and tourism geography with an emphasis on sustainability issues, entrepreneurship, intercultural communication and diversity. As a cultural geographer, he has been involved in several national and international research projects, mainly focusing on the internationalisation processes of the tourism industry. He is a fellow of the DGT (German Association for Tourism Research) and the Royal Geographical Society.

Foreword

*Prof. Walter Leal Filho (PhD, DSc, DPhil, DTech, DEd)
Chair, Inter-University Sustainable Development Research Programme*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 provide a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

They also entail elements of importance towards a strategic business engagement with sustainability issues. These offer a framework which provides businesses with a systematic approach to identify new business opportunities while contributing to the solution of the grand sustainability challenges facing the world today, including climate change. Each SDG, if achieved, will have a direct and significant positive impact on millions of people's lives around the world and the environment in which they live. Businesses have an opportunity to widen the purpose of business through adopting the SDGs as targets for their operations. Thus, they can make a meaningful contribution to the greater good through achieving their operational objectives.

Family businesses are uniquely placed to contribute to SDGs for many reasons. Firstly, because family business models have longer time perspectives, and this allows the family business to link with the longer term SDG time frame – 2030. Second, family businesses often focus on aspects of business operation which do not have an immediate return on investment such as relationship building with stakeholder groups. Thirdly, family businesses tend to rate the importance of ethics higher than standard businesses and thus align well with the social dimensions of the SDGs. Lastly, family businesses have intergenerational perspective which is a core principle of sustainability.

This book provides insights into how family business operationalises SDG#3: Good Health and Well-Being. This book uses a rigorous case study approach for family businesses to detail aspects of their business which help to advance the health and well-being of members of society. The cases provided here are living proof that the family business that operate for the greater good actually work! Non-family businesses can take a leaf out of the family businesses portrayed in this book as they can provide different perspectives on how businesses can successfully align SDGs and business strategy.

Despite many businesses having adopted environmental social governance strategies and environmental management systems, the effect of this activity has not been reflected in a healthier planet. Many ‘state of the environment’ reports indicate that planetary health is decreasing, and planetary boundaries are being crossed or are about to be crossed. Whilst the cause of this decline is not entirely the fault of business, there still needs to be a greater effort to address the decline. The challenge for family businesses is to use their unique characteristics and set ambitious programs of work that make a meaningful contribution to achieving global goals. This book provides insights into how family businesses can achieve such a mission and how non-family businesses can be inspired to do the same.

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