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Editorial

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Abstract. *This distinctive issue of Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society focusses on "Higher Education, Social Change and Impact", emerging from the COST programme SHIINE "Multi-disciplinary innovation for social change". The ideas presented in the papers are from various lenses reflecting an international perspective. There are significant and important insights which may be gained from this issue. International dialogue and the adoption of a multi-disciplinary approach to social problems can assist in the advancement of universal public policy. This will be to everyone's gain.*

Keywords: higher education, social innovation lab, management framework, market economy.

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When I agreed to do this editorial, it was with the firm belief in the importance of all members of society having access to Higher Education. Imperative is the insight that the learning and skills students attain would transfer seamlessly into building and fostering a better society. The concept of delivering a greater service for our community is not new. What is pertinent is how can Universities' ensure that what they do is fit for purpose and reflect a modern society in the twentieth century. Serious consideration is needed on the future skills requirements in light of digitalisation and global warning to name just two vital areas. The opportunity to highlight and place the mirror on the magnificent work conducted by esteemed colleagues reassures me that society will not be left short in ensuring that the emerging jobs of the future, will be filled by competent and valuable practitioners.

Universities are incredible places with very valuable resources that comprises of its extraordinary staff. It is the academic brilliance of its personnel that provides very valuable knowledge and nurtures and assists students as they traverse their pathways through university with the necessary competences and skills to become very valuable members of society.

As our own Irish Minister of Higher Education Simon Harris (2022) said *"Education is the greatest leveller in society."* Equity of access to Higher Education is important. Embedding inclusive education helps to ensure that all members of society have equal opportunities. Sustainability has never been more important. As one navigates this publication and reflects on the quality of the initiatives that are emerging through innovation labs clearly highlights emerging possibilities for further work. All of which identifies the importance of providing meaningful opportunities in higher education for all, whilst also reflecting diversity.

This special issue of Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society includes a themed article collection entitled "*Higher Education, Social Change and Impact*", developed in the framework of the COST programme SHIINE "Multi-disciplinary innovation for social change". COST stands for European Cooperation in Science and Technology. The aim of the action is to demonstrate, through the adoption of multi-disciplinary innovation methods, how best to respond to social problems through international discourse and the development of international public policy. This article collection explores how higher education institutions contribute to the creation of social change, transformation and impact and educate for sustainable development. The key themes covered in the special issues include: the concept of the emergence of public sector innovation labs which are very important and necessary for any growing economy along with a paper on how to successfully implement a management framework for community innovation labs. The impact of COVID-19 on those labs is also widely discussed with valuable knowledge shared that might assist Universities' in the future should unfortunately another pandemic occur. Establishing a social innovation programme at a University gives a clear vision of its importance and embedding professional competencies within entrepreneurship education makes for some wonderful insights. Finally, the economy and the potential regional growth and development is discussed and its impact on Higher Education.

In the work by Meister Broekema et al. from the Netherlands we can see the emergence of Public Sector Innovation Labs in theory and practice. Public Sector Innovation (PSI) Labs are gaining momentum within the European Union (EU). There are relatively new so it is important to acknowledge the work of those pioneering authors in this area. This project breaks new ground by dissecting the perception of these labs in multiple countries and addressing the question: 'What is the perceived added value of Public Sector Innovation labs for further developing theory as well as for society?' The combination of theoretical research with members of the EU funded project Multi-Disciplinary Innovation for Social Change (SHIINE) helped to provide excellent data. The authors showed that the PSI labs have developed into two competing concepts highlighting that the internal space for innovation within institutions is underutilised. This certainly ought to be reviewed placing emphasis on creating a safe environment for all stakeholders.

Păunescu et al. along with her colleagues from Finland, UK and Romania have given us some wonderful data from a study using the Delphi method to identify a management framework for community innovation labs (CILs) linked to higher education institutions (HEIs). The goal was to gather evidence from various elements of the management framework of HEI-based CILs and gain an understanding of their priorities. The results showed that CILs established in HEIs addressing societal challenges, clearly authenticated their purpose and role, and the kinds of governance, business method, capabilities and core activities fundamental to the establishment of viable CILs in HEIs; all of which has the most potential for benefiting society. Their priorities in managing CILs linked to HEIs are clearly articulated with wonderful plans for future research.

Other valuable insights were gained from the team led by Urmanaviciene from Estonia and her colleagues from Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland and Lithuania, which reviewed the impact of our friend COVID-19 and reflected on its disruption to higher education worldwide. As we are aware higher education institutions had to adapt very rapidly to the crisis. The authors clearly articulated that the impact of how COVID-19 affected social labs' activities and showed that the biggest challenge lies in organisational processes and human resource

management. Yet in all adversaries comes possibilities, which the authors have shown. COVID-19 provided opportunities to enhance the development of innovations and increase digitisation in social labs. It is interesting to note that social labs with a more flexible organisational processes were more successful in their adaptation. Overall this work subscribes to the scientific literature in relation to the response of social innovation labs to a pandemic.

A team from Norway namely Svennevik and Saidi speaks about social innovation-as-practice and about creating a culture for this important phenomenon in universities. The paper presents valuable lessons that can be replicated in other universities. The relevant questions addressed in this paper relates to *"how a programme operate within a university's existing managerial, financial and social structures to facilitate researchers' work and how can a (social) innovation programme that facilitates researchers' work contribute to building a physical, intellectual, managerial, and logistic environment that can create a culture for innovation"*. Both very important questions to be answered. The authors review pilot projects with initial motivations, early engagements in the programme, and future participation expectations giving clear answers as to how the programme operates within the university's existing structures. There are wonderful suggestions as to how the present system can be improved which is invaluable.

Other insights gained by a team in Serbia and Spain led by Matic et al. focussed on the area of the development of professional competences in sports science students with a focus on improving their entrepreneurship aspect. This research analysed the differences between first-year and fourth-year sports science students measuring cognitive abilities and personality traits. The results indicated that the strongest effect on work aspects of the personality of the first-year sports science students comes from *conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness. "Fourth-year sports science students showed extraversion, emotional stability, and openness. Cognitive abilities revealed that the strongest effect was produced by numerical ability".* All of the above dictate that there needs to be changes in the sports curriculum in relation to entrepreneurship education.

Apostol in other valuable work from Hungary tells us about universities in today's world and their significance on regional development. He stressed that universities have adopted the "*utilitarian paradigm focusing primarily on the number of students or the students' skills while neglecting individual growth and the university's raison d'etre"*. He focussed on successful case studies, as examples of successful universities. His work focussed on a "*regression model to examine the impact of universities and students on the quality of life and industry specialisation, as well as the factors influencing early student leave from education"*. His results showed that universities affect European regions' quality of life with the number of students negatively influences the industry's presence. However, lifelong learning has a positive impact on the regional economy.

All of the articles are worthwhile and makes for interesting reading. However, it is also important that the information gleaned from them is put into practice and replicated in other Universities and Colleges.

Thanking you,
Dr. Mary McDonnell Naughton