



***Sustainable and Responsible Management:***  
*A decade of Integrating Knowledge and Creating Societal Impact through Innovation and Entrepreneurship*

**TRACK 02:**  
**Circular Economy to Create Societal Impact – Innovative Teaching Methods and Approaches in Management Education**

**TRACK CHAIRS**

**Prof. Dr. Maud Helene Schmiedeknecht** (ESB Business School, Reutlingen University, Germany)

**Prof. Dr. Cristian R. Loza Adauí** (Professor of Management and Corporate Social Responsibility, THI Business School, Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt, Germany)

**KEYWORDS**

*Circular Economy, circular thinking, innovative teaching methods, circular economy teaching, circular economy education*

**TRACK HIGHLIGHT**

This track discusses about the role of circular economy in business administration and management programs curricula as well as the best ways for integrating them across study programs.

**TRACK DESCRIPTION**

Organizations face the challenges of defossilizing, decarbonizing, and dematerializing their activities, as the world's goal is to limit global warming and achieve a climate-neutral world by the mid-century (United Nations, 2015). Circular Economy (CE) is one promising systems solution framework to support organizations in minimizing the overall use of resources, especially emissions, and waste, and maximizing the value of material resources by establishing circular products and materials (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2013; Kirchherr et al., 2017). Moreover, CE principles are relevant to a wide range of industries and sectors, and they require a different way of thinking about production, consumption, and waste.



How can organizations integrate the CE principles to create a societal impact? Innovation and entrepreneurship play a considerable role in this CE discussion: Regarding innovation, implementing circular economy programs requires radical changes in product, business model, and ecosystem innovation (Konietzko et al., 2020). On the other hand, with the entrepreneurial approach of analyzing problems, generating and validating ideas, as well as developing and scaling up the best solutions, the circularity potential can be unlocked (Takacs et al., 2020).

The societal impact of business schools through teaching, research, and transfer activities is eminent for the necessary sustainable transformation preparing current and future leaders to contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). Thus, the challenge relies not only on the generation and transfer of knowledge but also on influencing behavior (Bustamante et al., 2022). Nevertheless, while courses on “Sustainability” and “Corporate Social Responsibility” as well as on “Innovation” and “Entrepreneurship” have been increasingly integrated into the curricula of business schools, the integration of CE courses and modules is still an open task, arguably because teaching methods on CE are still at the nascent stage (Balcioglu, 2022; del Vecchio et al., 2021; Kirchherr & Piscicelli, 2019; Kopnina, 2018, 2019; Mendoza et al., 2019). As a result, CE practices are becoming an important area of study for management education. There are at least four relevant reasons for considering CE as a topic to teach:

(1) The circular economy provides a framework for businesses to transition from a linear model of consumption and waste to a more sustainable and resilient one. By adopting circular economy principles, businesses can reduce their environmental impact, conserve resources, and contribute to the global effort to address sustainability challenges.

(2) Customers, investors, and other stakeholders are increasingly expecting businesses to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. Management education that includes circular economy principles helps businesses to understand and meet these expectations and to build their reputation as responsible and sustainable enterprises.

(3) The circular economy offers numerous business opportunities, such as developing new products and services, creating closed-loop supply chains, and engaging in circular innovation. Management education that includes circular economy principles helps businesses to identify and capitalize on these opportunities and to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

(4) The circular economy requires businesses to think differently about how they use resources and design products. This encourages innovation and creativity, which are essential for businesses to stay competitive and adapt to changing market conditions.



In this track, we call for contributions dealing with innovative teaching methods and approaches to integrate Circular Economy in management education to create a societal impact. What innovative teaching methods and approaches exist besides the well-established case study methods? How can we inspire and support business school students to “think circularly” and cope with the complexity of decisions arising? Which are the best ways to address circular economy principles: refuse, reduce, reuse, redesign, refurbish, recycle, repair, remanufacture, and repurpose? Furthermore, which of these principles are imperative for management education?

Some suggestions for contributions can include the topics listed below but are not restricted to them:

- Challenges, enablers, and barriers to the integration of Circular Economy into business schools’ curricula
- Innovative approaches to integrate Circular Economy into management education – beyond case studies
- New methodologies and tools to teach critical competencies of “circular thinking” (simulations, card decks, gamification, etc.)
- Inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge transfer in business schools
- Ways to inspire business school students for circular business model innovation
- Measurement of effectiveness and quality of circular economy teaching methods
- Experiences with courses or programs dedicated to the circular economy in managerial education

## REFERENCES

Balcioglu, H. (2022) Circular Economy and Strategies of Sustainability. In: Bustamante, S., Saltevo, E., Schmitz, M, & Martinovic, M. (eds) Shaping a Sustainable Future: Innovative Teaching Practices for Educating Responsible Leaders. Nomos. doi.org/10.5771/9783748933090

Bustamante, S., Martinovic, M & Shaman, K. (2022). Fundamental Insights about Teaching Formats in the Area of Sustainability and Responsibility. In: Bustamante, S.; Saltevo, E.; Schmitz, M, & Martinovic, M. (eds) Shaping a Sustainable Future: Innovative Teaching Practices for Educating Responsible Leaders. Nomos. doi.org/10.5771/9783748933090.

Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2013): Towards the circular economy Vol. 1: an economic and business rationale for an accelerated transition.

Del Vecchio, P., Secundo, G., Mele, G. & Passiante, G. (2021). Sustainable Entrepreneurship Education for a Circular Economy: Emerging Perspectives in Europe. International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, Vol. 27 No. 8, pp. 2096-2124. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-03-2021-0210>

Kirchherr, J., Reike, D., & Hekkert, M. (2017). Conceptualizing the Circular Economy: An Analysis of 114 Definitions. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 127, 221–232. doi.org/10.1016/J.RESCONREC.2017.09.005

Kirchherr, J. & Piscicelli, L. (2019). Towards an Education for the Circular Economy (ECE): Five Teaching Principles and a Case Study. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*. 150, 104406



Kopnina, H. (2018). Teaching Circular Economy: Overcoming the Challenge of Greenwashing. In: Marques, J. (eds) Handbook of Engaged Sustainability. Springer, Cham. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53121-2\_48-1

Kopnina, H. (2019). Green-washing or Best Case Practices? Using Circular Economy and Cradle to Cradle Case Studies in Business Education. Journal of Cleaner Production, 219, 10 May, pp. 613–621. doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.02.005

Konietzko, J., Bocken, N., Hultink, E.J. (2020). A Tool to Analyze, Ideate and Develop Circular Innovation Ecosystems. Sustainability 2020, 12, 417; doi:10.3390/su12010417

Mendoza, J.M.F.; Gallego-Schmid, A. & Azapagic, A. (2019). Building a Business Case for Implementation of a Circular Economy in Higher Education Institutions. Journal of Cleaner Production. 202, 20 May, 553-567. doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.02.045

Takacs, F., Stechow, R. & Frankenberger, K. (2020). Circular Ecosystems: Business Model Innovation for the Circular Economy. White Paper of the Institute of Management & Strategy, University of St. Gallen.

United Nations (2015): Paris Agreement. [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf)