



ASIA SAVVY

NEW ZEALAND ASIA CONFERENCE 2018

Purpose and Profit

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The University of Auckland Business School
12 Grafton Road, Auckland



THE UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND ASIA
INSTITUTE



Where are you from? Where is your dream job?

At registration attendees marked on a world map where they are from and where their dream job is. Asia Savvy draws a truly multicultural audience of students, many of whom are aspiring for a future career in New Zealand and Asia.

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Conference theme

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New Zealand Asia Conference 2018

This year's Asia Savvy conference, Purpose and Profit, addressed how firms pursue a purpose beyond simply making profit. Panellists from some of New Zealand's largest corporates and inspiring social enterprises spoke about how businesses conceive of, pursue and realise this larger purpose. Each of the speakers gave accounts of their own career path and personal incentives leading to their current positions, and provided guidance to students interested in entering corporate social responsibility or social enterprise.

The conference encouraged students' participation testing their new knowledge of how business can develop initiatives to contribute to the wellbeing of society.

To this end, the conference featured workshops in which students formed teams and put forth their ideas about how to best combine purpose and profit. The Ākina Foundation – an organisation devoted to cultivating and growing New Zealand's social enterprise scene – sponsored one such workshop that guided students through the steps of setting up a social enterprise.

To participate in the conference, students were required to submit essays explaining their views on firms' larger role in society. Judges then reviewed the students' essays, awarding prizes to the top writers. Thanks to the generosity of International Volunteer HQ – a New Zealand-based volunteer travel company that operates internationally one of the best essayists received a paid-for two-week volunteer experience in Asia.



Opening address



Purpose and Profit

Professor **Natasha Hamilton-Hart**, Director of the New Zealand Asia Institute, opened the Asia Savvy 2018 Conference with an explanation of this year's theme – Purpose and Profit. She outlined how the conference would showcase examples of New Zealand corporates that take corporate social responsibility seriously, as well as New Zealand social enterprises active in Asia. Natasha noted this was the eighth consecutive year of the conference and spoke about the importance of the student involvement. She gave special recognition to Dinah Towle, the New Zealand Asia Institute's Asia Savvy Project Manager, for her hard work developing the conference and working with the committee throughout the year. Finally she welcomed students from five other tertiary institutions outside the University of Auckland.

Ruth Huang, leading the Asia Savvy student committee, thanked everyone for their work in putting the conference together. She noted that the experience provided her and other members of the team with valuable lessons, and how the committee's passion was reflected in the excellent organisation of the event.

Keynote

Purpose and Profit



Professor Jilnaught Wong, Professor of Accounting in the Department of Accounting and Finance at the University of Auckland Business School, set the tone for the day with his inspiring keynote address. He described purpose as a “sequence of our lives that is meant to bring happiness”, and noted that it is sometimes difficult to find purpose in life; just being good at doing something does not guarantee a sense of purpose. Jilnaught inspired attending students to strive for better and farther-reaching goals, urging them to not be satisfied with their current activities. Turning to his own experience, Jilnaught noted that he regularly assesses what passions in his own life drive him to get up in the morning, saying that sometimes one needs courage to change course to pursue purpose.

Organisations, not just people, have purpose. Jilnaught affirmed to students the importance of identifying what guides them, and that one way they can do this is by joining organisations with purpose: “It’s only when you hitch your wagon to something bigger that you realise your true purpose.” Social enterprises and corporates with corporate social responsibility programmes are two examples of organisations not treating purpose and profit as mutually exclusive concepts. They show that purpose and profit can work hand in hand. Jilnaught concluded by encouraging everyone in the room to aspire to put the greater good above their own, to find the spark that drives them, and to “live it”.



Panel Discussion 1

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) – Learn from major New Zealand corporates and their take on CSR

The panel was composed of **Meagan Schloeffel**, Sustainability Manager, Air New Zealand; **Camellia Yang**, Digital Communications Manager, Westpac; and **Meredith Dawson Lawry**, Global Sustainability, Quality and Compliance Manager, Icebreaker. The discussant was **Jamie Newth**, a lecturer in Management and International Business at the University of Auckland. **Teresa Lee**, of the Asia Savvy student committee, introduced the panel.

Meagan Schloeffel discussed her personal pathway towards a career in sustainability. She explained how Air New Zealand positions people, place and economy as central to its approach to CSR and sustainability. Air New Zealand has a Sustainability Advisory Panel consisting of external subject-matter experts who help shape and inform the airline's sustainability agenda. One key component of the company's sustainability strategy is conservation in New Zealand. For instance, through its partnership with the Department of Conservation Air New Zealand supports conservation projects alongside New Zealand's Great Walks, Short Walks and Day Hikes and flies threatened species to safe breeding sites around the country. Carbon reduction, an area of particular concern and interest to customers of the airline industry, is another key component of the company's CSR and sustainability strategy. The company has developed a customer offsetting programme FlyNeutral, that supports permanent

native forestry projects in New Zealand. Meagan emphasised the key for students is to believe in their own cause and drive it, and not to rely on others. Resilience is critical and individuals need to continue to pursue their passions. Beyond being motivated, she encouraged the next generation to be creative in thinking about how to address future challenges.

Camellia Yan spoke about her personal career journey and described the increasing importance Westpac places on social and environmental responsibility. Westpac has set environmental goals and solutions addressing issues such as carbon emissions and reducing its carbon footprint. By 2020, the company's intention is to lend \$2 billion to the clean technology sector to encourage its expansion. Another component of Westpac's social activity is a staff volunteer programme working on New Zealand rescue helicopters. The company is also carrying out large campaigns related to making housing affordable and promoting diversity. Westpac sees climate change, financial well-being and poverty as important issues, and aligns its own goals with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Camellia closed with an inspirational quote from former President of the United States, Barack Obama: "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

Panel Discussion 1



Meredith Dawson Lawry explained Icebreaker’s approach to corporate social responsibility, acknowledging there are several important issues to address in the worldwide fashion and textile industry. Icebreaker’s supply chain process is composed of seven stages to be monitored and maintained through a sustainability lens. The company is committed to “pursue better” in several areas: purpose, performance, traceability and transparency. She elaborated that “pursuing better” is something towards which the company constantly strives. It discloses the raw material sourcing of its products, keeping customers well informed about the supply chain’s origins. Icebreaker received an A+ rating in Baptist World Aid Australia’s 2018 Ethical Fashion Report, based on its transparent reporting practices.

To conclude, **Jamie Newth** summarised the panellists’ points and then posed them questions. He and the panellists discussed the value of strong networking and social media use for attracting jobseekers, and the importance of learning new practices by attending events such as conferences. Members of the audience then posed questions to the panel about CSR forms, compliance audits, setbacks and ways to encourage companies to implement CSR programmes. Major takeaways from the audience-inspired discussion were the importance of firms communicating CSR practices to customers and being open to customer feedback, and that companies need to proactively carry out accountability measures and evolve their own CSR programmes.



Asia New Zealand Foundation

Ziena Jalil, Business Programme Manager for the Asia New Zealand Foundation (ANZF), gave an inspiring account of her career and the many opportunities she experienced after leaving New Zealand and travelling to Asia. She shared her personal mantra: “Seize every opportunity that comes your way”. The experience and lessons learned overseas gave her a first-hand understanding of different Asian cultures and helped her enormously with her current role at the Foundation. Ziena explained that one of ANZF’s main focuses is expanding entrepreneurship opportunities between Asia and New Zealand. ANZF’s Education Programme currently offers to take New Zealand educators to Asia for in-country experience, provides Asia-

focused curriculum resources for educators in New Zealand, and brings Asia-focused events to schools. Ziena emphasised ANZF’s desire to involve students in various capacities to build future business relationships between New Zealand and Asia. She encouraged the students to consider ANZF’s internship opportunities and postgraduate grants.



Panel Discussion 2

Purpose and Profit



Social entrepreneurship – Be inspired by some of New Zealand’s most exciting social entrepreneurs

The panel was composed of **Ben Brown**, General Manager, International Volunteer HQ (IVHQ); **Qiuqing Easterbrook-Wong**, Chief Executive, Borderless Productions; and **Jade Gray**, Founder, Gungho Pizza. The discussant was **Chris Woods**, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University of Auckland Business School. **Min-Ji Yang**, of the Asia Savvy student committee, introduced the panel.

Ben Brown began with the story of how Daniel Radcliffe established IVHQ in 2007. Ben highlighted how IVHQ prioritises being transparent, affordable and impactful, and that these priorities are important to the individuals for whom IVHQ provides volunteer opportunities in 50 destinations around the world. He noted his own guiding career principles: a sense of purpose; a desire to have a role as an “intrapreneur” (an internal change-maker); to prove that sustainable business is better business; and to create an impact legacy. Social entrepreneurs can drive change from

within an organisation, and he encouraged audience members to try being intrapreneurs. He challenged everyone to “think differently; don’t just accept the status quo”. Ben closed by challenging everyone to decide on what they value, what success looks like, who they admire, what inspires them, and who can help them pursue their passions.

Qiuqing (Q) Easterbrook-Wong radiates a wonderful social entrepreneurial spirit. She started by stating, “Change is inevitable. Make it good,” and noted that profit needs to be viewed as an enabler and a by-product of business, not as its whole purpose. She further noted that a company’s brand and reputation influence its integrity. She shared a graphic of the Borderless Productions, breaking down how it conveyed the “what” and “who” of the company’s purpose. She summarised Borderless Productions’ purpose as a passion for showing how film can be used a platform for social change, and recommended audience members go out of their way to initiate,

develop and design their own companies. She showed a video about the Auckland Humanity Project (AHP), stating the video impacted audience members and affected several organisations' conception of purpose. She ended by saying it is important to never be afraid of taking risks.

The third panellist to present was **Jade Gray**, owner of Gungho Pizza, with three outlets currently based in China. Jade shared stories about his own career path, emphasising it is important to not be afraid to fail as an entrepreneur; the important thing is to get back up. He encouraged everyone to make purpose as important as profit and create businesses that have social impact. Purpose starts with persistence and the ability to push through ideas; a single person can make big changes if they are persistent. "Generally, I believe that every business can change the world," he said. Jade shared his three P's of business – people, profit and planet. He posed the question, using Gungho Pizza as an example: "How do you take something as basic as pizza and change the world?" Jade concluded by reinforcing to audience members that they should never give up on their passions and dreams.

To conclude, **Chris Woods** recapped the range of exciting social entrepreneurship opportunities described by the panellists. She briefly remarked on how opportunities may evolve in the future given changing circumstances, such as the rise of China and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. Chris then turned to the students in the audience for questions. One issue that arose during questions was students'

interest in barriers to obtaining B corporation certification (the certification is issued to companies that balance purpose and profit). The panellists stressed that the main barriers to acquiring certification are lack of awareness, drive and time; the certification is something that would benefit many social enterprises, but they lack the resources to acquire it. Another issue of interest to students that arose during questions was how entrepreneurs cope with stress. Panellists agreed it is important to have boundaries in terms of time and to be sensitive to other commitments; entrepreneurs should make time for themselves and not be consumed by their passion.



Awards and Concluding Remarks



Natasha Hamilton-Hart closed the conference by thanking everyone for their participation in a successful, energising event. This was followed by drawing prizes and an award presentation to the essay winners, **Catherine Mules** and **Lauren Wilks**.

Asia Savvy Quiz

To finish the day, teams participated in a quiz sponsored by Gong Cha. It consisted of eight rounds of questions posed to the teams. The student committee tabulated scores based on the teams' answers to announce the overall winning team.



Student discussions and recommendations



Workshop 1: Corporate crisis management

The existing tables as groups divided the room and a crisis management scenario was given, with tables split into the management and the customers to gain both perspectives. The groups discussed the scenario and came up with critical issues to be addressed to manage the situation. The teams agreed that the management must respond with public relations and apologise to react to the media outcry, determining that a social media response would be appropriate to provide real-time transparency. From the

customer perspective, the teams agreed that transparency and accessibility was key to dealing with the crisis. The transfer of information was another common theme at the heart of the brainstorming from the customer perspective. In the crisis, many teams suggested a consideration of compensation as a potential mitigating factor.

The format for this workshop allowed groups to recognise and debate an issue from an opposing point of view.





Workshop 2: How to start your own social enterprise

In this workshop, H el ene Tholonait, Global Relations Director for  Akina Foundation, described the importance of concisely defining social enterprises' purpose. She also discussed how profit is important for surviving in the business world, so striking the right balance between purpose and profit is crucial. She showed a video about a social enterprise business model that balances these two components.

H el ene then posed a question to the audience members, who had been divided into teams: How can you prove you are actually making a change in the world? The teams first brainstormed about what problem they wanted to address as a social enterprise, generating ideas about how to solve the problem while still making a profit. The teams then created short elevator pitches about their plan, which they presented to neighbouring teams.

In terms of issues to address, the teams came up with several: fresh water availability, reducing

plastics in oceans, teacher shortages, economic growth, homelessness and public health issues.

The groups came up with innovative ideas to combine these social purposes into business plans. For example, the team concerned with fresh water availability decided to desalinate ocean water for safe human consumption, and then sell the resultant salt to make profit. Another example came from the team concerned with plastics in oceans: they proposed to sell marine-friendly alternative swimwear, and then allocate 30% of profits towards cleaning polluted waters and shores.

To conclude the workshop, H el ene stressed the importance of market research to make sure an idea is unique and has a clear solution. There are many examples of social enterprises with great ideas that cannot make enough profit to stay in business. She also emphasised that impact takes time to see, and that there must be clear measurements of success to monitor advances.





Student essays

Student essays

Participants in the Asia Savvy conference are required to complete a 300-word opinion piece on selected topics relevant to each conference theme.

This year's topics were:

- A volunteer experience abroad would be of use in a modern career
- All businesses need to embrace corporate social responsibility to succeed in Asia
- Graduates want to work for companies who take social responsibility seriously

Two prizes were awarded for this year's best two essays: a two-week volunteer travel experience in Asia kindly sponsored by International Volunteer HQ, and an iPad. The winner of the travel experience was Lauren Wilks. The winner of the iPad was Catherine Mules.

Both their essays are included overleaf along with other finalists.



Graduates want to work for companies who take social responsibility seriously

Sophie Browning, The University of Auckland

Graduates want to work for companies who take social responsibility seriously because it is a reflection of what that graduate supports. Working for companies can be likened to working for an 'idea'. That is, the actions of that company form an idea of the goals of that company and what it contributes. For a given company, that idea may be helping local schools or by having ethical labour practices. For another company, they may ignore corporate social responsibility and cause significant pollution from their production practices.

Graduates will view the actions of the company as a reflection of themselves as contributors to that idea. Hence, why companies who practice corporate social responsibility are considered more favourably by graduates. Graduates want to proudly support and represent companies which are conscious and influencing positive social change.

Employment, like consumerism, can be very political and about choosing a brand that

best reflects the ideals and aspirations of that graduate. A graduate who is significantly concerned about environmental issues is unlikely to work for a company that has a reputation for harming the environment. As for myself, I am concerned with societal issues with education, so I would look favourably upon organisations which support local schools, for example.

Take, for example, McDonalds and its significant investment in corporate social responsibility, including climate change, sustainable farming, supporting communities, and their partnership with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. Their investment captures a broad range of graduates due to their extensive coverage of societal and environmental issues. Corporate social responsibility is a way of appealing to graduates by exhibiting how their contribution positively impacts different areas of society. Corporate social responsibility markets a more significant 'purpose' to graduates and to proudly work for a company that is influencing positive social change.

All businesses need to embrace corporate social responsibility to succeed in Asia

Yujie Dai, The University of Auckland

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is seen as an efficient way to gain reputation and achieve high-quality output in many corporate cultures as it not only benefits for themselves but it also contributes to the economic growth of the whole country. This essay will examine the importance of CSR for business operation in Asia. Nowadays, globalization is the catalyst for pushing more and more Asian companies to involve into CSR programs. In fact, the spread of CSR programs in Asia is influenced by western companies and governments. These shareholders advocate that CSR is not only about philanthropy but also a strategy to grow companies bigger. Although maximizing profits is a fundamental goal for corporates, companies who initially take social responsibility have easy access to resources in market competition. In Asian culture, obligation and responsibility are indispensable concepts of socio-economic activities including production, a range of services. Adopting CSR strategy can help companies enhance their influence in the industry and increase brand

value as customers and stakeholders prefer to a dependable company. Some movements that companies have made like protecting the environment are indeed beneficial for Asian sustainable development. Another aspect is the standardization of the system in the Asian market. The government requires enterprises to regulate operations. For instance, in Indonesia, companies have to arrange their budgets to implement CSR systems if they utilize natural resources due to Indonesia company law. With the legal system improving, if the company ignores the adoption of CSR, it will face risks of losing reputation and trust from customers and shareholders. Furthermore, CSR can reduce costs for companies in long term. In another word, it has high return-on-investment rates. When they have more and more CSR programs, they even save money from advertisements and this propaganda is the most powerful strategy to build a solid relationship with customers and shareholders. In conclusion, businesses have to involve into CSR programs so that they can make long-term profits in Asian market.

A volunteer experience abroad would be of use in a modern career

Sandy Guo, The University of Auckland

In a modern society and career, it is becoming increasingly important to have diversity.

Diversity in people through their perspectives, upbringing, gender and more. A volunteering experience abroad would help to achieve this and also show passion and interest outside of the respected profession.

As the world becomes more interconnected and multicultural, the need to think bigger and beyond is also growing. Going overseas is a perfect way to become more diverse through; facing new challenges and difficulties that forces one to problem solve, meeting new people who may have different customs and religions and experiencing a new culture and environment to gain a new perspective of the world around them. These new ways of thinking, perspectives and mannerisms make someone much more valuable as an employee. This is because they are more likely to be able to understand and engage with a wider range of clients and colleagues. As well as apply their newfound ways of thinking to solving work problems and team projects.

Whereas, volunteering shows one's ability to be philanthropic, empathetic and care for the world around us and take some responsibility. Often volunteering is a humbling experience and also sheds some light on challenges faced by others and put things into perspective. It also shows that one cares for more than just themselves but also wants to be a good citizen of the world and make it a better place.

After considering the benefits of going overseas and volunteering, it goes without saying that the two together is of the upmost importance in a modern career.

All businesses need to embrace corporate social responsibility to succeed in Asia

Catherine Mules, Auckland University of Technology

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) develops as an ever-necessary yet complex component of business success. It varies between contexts, with no single or globally-accepted definition. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (2013) defines CSR broadly, as the integration of social and environmental issues into business strategies. This suggests CSR is about going beyond corporate interests – to also being proactive in ensuring social interests are also met. Instant communication, accelerating risks of ecological and political disaster, and scepticism towards business, are driving its increasing relevance (Vogel, 2007). For many businesses today, CSR underpins the notion of a ‘good corporate citizen’.

CSR is predominantly practiced by big, Western-based multi-nationals however, as a global market and the world’s most populous region (International Monetary Fund, 2017), Asia is a challenging but important CSR focus. Somewhat contrasting with traditionally democratic values of the West, Asia has a long history of human rights and employment violations, still today linked to its global reputation for low-cost production (CSR Asia, 2015).

Despite its complexity, recent research shows that CSR has successfully underpinned some Asian business initiatives, with both financial and social benefits (CSR Asia, 2015; John, Chia & Ito, 2017). In India, for example, the YES Bank’s (2015) instant mobile payment service helped local farming communities who, need cash payments and often face financial exploitation from intermediaries charging extra commission (CSR Asia, 2015). The alignment of CSR with traditional

aspects of Asian culture, such as corporate philanthropy – the funding of public services for schools and hospitals – is another promising sign for the growth of CSR (John et al., 2017).

As demand for CSR grows, it is likely to be treated less as a reputational tool and more as a social benefit (Higgins & Debroux, 2009). In Asia, an international business hub (International Monetary Fund, 2017), the exact form of its development remains to be seen.

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Graduates want to work for companies who take social responsibility seriously

Marie Poff, The University of Auckland

In the world today, graduates want to work for companies who take corporate social responsibility seriously. Gone are the days where sustainability and social welfare were inferior goals to profit and personal wealth. As we become a more self-aware generation, aiming each day to improve the world around us, getting a graduate role where we can make a difference is highly prioritised.

Starting with university students, who have continued to develop a more worldly and self-aware view, it's clear that everything is interconnected. With globalisation comes an international awareness of the mutualistic nature of the world, where doing 'good' for our communities will come back as a benefit for everyone.

As we all become global citizens of an increasingly multi-cultural world, our generation has realised the impact each individual can have on the world. This is a reflection of public opinion, which has also developed to become more socially and environmentally minded.

Consumers are more likely to pay a premium to know that the company they buy from, are socially responsible.

With this realisation comes the responsibility that we all have to do our part, to ensure our business practices today will help develop a better world tomorrow. In business, we have come to realise that social enterprise is a sustainable and viable business option, for those who do not only value profit. At university, clubs such as Social Innovation NZ continue to show students that it is possible to combine a high salary with making a difference.

As such, graduates have come to prioritise not only salary, but aspects of a company such as work culture, vision, and how seriously they take corporate social responsibility.

These intelligent, self-aware students are usually highly demanded by companies. With this change in perspective, companies have had to adapt their strategies to reflect the changing landscape of our business environment.

All businesses need to embrace corporate social responsibility to succeed in Asia

Wei Heng Pok, The University of Auckland

CSR has often been misrepresented as token efforts to help communities and environment. Rather, it is understanding that 'corporations are private organisations with public responsibilities' (Cragg, 2002) to stakeholders such as governments and local communities to best preserve confidence in their company.

I believe that businesses must embrace CSR in Asia for two reasons.

Firstly, Asian businesses must embrace CSR due to globalization. As Asia has undoubtedly led the race in globalization, so too is there scrutiny on their global supply chains - they must demonstrate global competitiveness through 'resilience to global environmental (and social) impacts' (Milovanovic, Milovanovic & Radisavljevic, 2017). As such, in order for the world to prosper, Asian businesses must adopt CSR policies ensuring responsible and sustainable supply chains. A recent 9 Million Euro project was created for this very purpose - funded by the European Union to adopt policies in Human and labour rights and environmental protection Standards (ILO, 2018), ensuring prosperity for workers and companies.

Secondly, CSR can be a tool used to align government policy and market behaviour in Asia. Asia is especially sensitive to government

policies, with China's number of sustainability reports growing from 1 to 600 in 2009 after the government announced to spend billions on tree planting and reforestation. In addition, after Japan announced a set of principles for environmental finance, investments in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Assets grew faster in Japan than anywhere else from 2014-2016. Evidently, CSR in the form of governmental legislation is especially useful in moulding organisational growth in Asia.

The single greatest act of CSR started from 'cap and trade' policies to address acid rain from corporate pollution. Who is to say that we cannot alleviate poverty next? As the world advances, so too much organisations rethink their obligations to create a more sustainable future.

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All businesses need to embrace corporate social responsibility to succeed in Asia

Jelisa Rana, The University of Auckland

All businesses must embrace corporate social responsibility to succeed in Asia. This is because there is now a greater need for businesses to be more aware of the impacts that they could make to their stakeholders as this is becoming the new business norm and that it is a necessity for businesses to realize that corporate social responsibility is now an essential component to thrive.

Nowadays, there is a shift in our global market where the rise of new technology and innovation has enabled a more connected world meaning that there is more transparency in business operations and easier access to potential consumers and investors who are now more affluent and can make more complex decisions on where to purchase their products. Furthermore, with the media, business exploitations such as modern day slavery are more likely to be known which can heavily damage reputation. As consumers are now more conscious, they are better appealed with branding that supports healthy and positive organisational movements. By bringing the stakeholder concerns to the forefront and

anticipating and reflecting those concerns would actually minimise harm to businesses and this could also engage customer involvement which could possibly increase revenue.

Businesses contribute largely to our changing environments this with their operations but could be the solution to treat this problem by ensuring business include corporate social responsibility in their strategic decisions and planning in their models and processes. A way of doing this which would also mitigate costs is by using environmentally friendly alternatives or substitutes.

Corporate social responsibility gives a competitive edge to businesses as they imply that they care for their stakeholders and their businesses more but this is slowly becoming the new norm and business should be quick to adapt to this positive change for the better or they may fall behind or even worse lose business.

A volunteer experience abroad would be of use in a modern career

Naveen Singh, University of Waikato

We live in a world where our diverse cultures and traditions are more intertwined and accepted than ever before. However, we still have a long way to go before it can be said that every single person regardless of their background, feels safe and accepted in their workplace or community. Thus, it is vital to have as much cultural and skills based exposure as possible. A volunteer experience abroad is a great way to advance yourself and those around you, especially for a modern career.

The biggest benefit a volunteer experience abroad can provide is cultural exposure. Through first-hand experiencing other traditions, values and lifestyles, we can learn how to work with people of diverse backgrounds better as we understand them more. This is particularly important as our workplaces continue to be more diverse so effective teamwork is extremely important to achieve timely and quality results.

The second advantage of such an experience is the personal growth. By working in another country, not only do you get to expand your perspective, you get to advance your skillset

and knowledge from learning different practices or ways of approaching situations. These learnings can be taken and applied into another culture to help make processes and products more sustainable and ultimately reach long term goals of companies, countries and causes.

And finally, one of the best things a person can do is to help others for the better. As Heather French Henry said, "Volunteering is at the very core of being a human. No one has made it through life without someone else's help." Plus, you never know, you could be helping someone else to have the opportunity to become the next Bill Gates or Nelson Mandela which in turn has an even greater impact on developing a better world for all.

Graduates want to work for companies who take social responsibility seriously

Lauren Wilks, The University of Auckland

Many paint the millennial generation as self-entitled, technology focused and worrying about being the next biggest and greatest thing, but I believe that there is a growing awareness among the younger generation in understanding our role in creating a better world.

90% of students in a study said they would sacrifice some portion of their future salary in order to work for a responsible employer (Haski-Leventhal & Pournader, 2017). This significant number shows the high importance graduates hold in working for honest employers with ethical values.

New graduates are leaving universities with a wider range of skill sets than years ago. From stage one papers, the concept of corporate social responsibility is weaved throughout the curriculum. Graduates having fresh perspectives and ideas towards the role of the company in the world, can effectively contribute in making a difference. Workers are also more willing to put in the extra effort when they are working for a company they believe is making a real difference.

It is vital that companies realise this shift and commit to strong values and ethics, and if not, they may miss out on employing the top graduates. As part of starting packages, many big companies promote that they offer a paid volunteer day where the worker can help out with a project they are interested in. Also, companies may have a sustainability division to show their commitment to making practical change. These are just two examples where firms are making changes to attract new graduates.

Business can care for the greater good while achieving economic success. Graduates are not only wanting to work for firms involved with corporate social responsibility but are necessary for the future success of corporate social responsibility in companies.

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A volunteer experience abroad would be of use in a modern career

Irene Wu, The University of Auckland

As we head into a decade of work that becomes increasingly global, it becomes vital for multicultural perspective to be appreciated and differences to be acknowledged. Volunteering abroad is an opportunity that allows people to make a difference whilst learning about another culture through total immersion.

In our increasingly diverse world, more and more challenges of increasing diversity in the workforce follow. Even as companies 15recruitment and recruitment alone. There are no set targets after recruitment to allow these diverse employees to thrive and it becomes too easy for the employees to follow the status quo despite their background. Thus, to get true diversity, there is a requirement from diverse and non-diverse leaders to work together.

Volunteering abroad is one of many ways for those who grew up in a monotonous environment to initiate this movement. The experiences of volunteering abroad can expose one to refreshingly different new ways of living, communicating and most importantly thinking. Successfully volunteering abroad necessitates the volunteers to break away from their normal

routines, to network, promote self-growth and then change their mind-set in a natural manner. This outweighs any surface level empowerment talks, as passively digesting the notion of diversity is unlike experiencing it first-hand.

In short, I believe that the experience of volunteering abroad shouldn't be limited to just students who want to go for an overseas experience but should be a vital systematically encouraged part of all companies who truly see the value of diversity. Diversity shouldn't be limited to the recruitment stage but allowed to at the centre of the work that the company strives to do, and one way to do this is encouraging both employees and employers to volunteer abroad.

The New Zealand Asia Institute (NZAI)

The New Zealand Asia Institute (NZAI) was established in May 1995 as part of the University of Auckland’s strategic plan for internationalisation. The decision to set up the Institute was a response to the growing importance of Asia to New Zealand politically, economically and culturally. It signified an evolving recognition of the need for an organisation able to reach across academic boundaries within the University and relate this national resource to policy-making and the wider community in New Zealand.

As a university-wide initiative, NZAI has some core objectives, including:

- Strengthening interdisciplinary and inter-faculty cooperation in order to ensure interested students in all academic fields have access to Asia-related courses
- Maximising the University’s location in New Zealand’s largest city with its many commercial links to Asia
- Brokering the University’s Asian expertise in policy advice and case study analyses to Government departments and the private sector
- Building a core of specialists on New Zealand-Asia issues to provide a forum for informed and forward-looking discussions on what is happening in Asia and its implications for New Zealand
- Involving the increasing Asian population both in the University and the city

NZAI’s current positioning in the Business School was of strategic importance as it added to the Institute’s policy focus with a complementary

applied business dimension. It also allowed NZAI to enrich and enhance its research portfolio with more programmatic projects, which will better engage targeted groups in the public. As a result, the Institute is better enabled to serve as a focal point for the development of multidisciplinary activities that will involve research teams and postgraduate students.

Continuing the support for Asia-Savvy fits with NZAI’s overall mission to “develop graduates, knowledge and ideas that enhance New Zealand’s understanding of, and ability to engage productively with, Asia.” Through bringing together and engaging increased numbers of Asia-savvy students, businesses and other leaders with interests in Asia in this student-led conference, NZAI is helping to create and sustain a platform for engagement with Asia.



Acknowledgements

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We acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors for this year's conference:

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Asia Savvy Alumni Network

Asia Savvy holds networking events aimed at conference alumni and friends who are keen to be part of an on-going community of like-minded Asia-savvy seekers.

Our activities will include:

- Organising events and reunions
- Communicating with alumni and friends by email
- Keeping our alumni and friends in touch with one another

Our informal networking events are held at the University of Auckland Business School during the evening. They provide a great opportunity for you to:

- Learn from our selected Asia Savvy experts
- Expand your own network of like-minded contacts

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Asia Echo

Asia Echo provides news relevant for New Zealand businesses engaging with Asia. Every month we bring you information that will help you to learn more about Asia. We select the most interesting articles from a variety of reputable sources.

If you would like to receive our e-newsletter, please send your details to Dinah Towle at d.towle@auckland.ac.nz.





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