

Preface

The idea of the book was born in the *Business Ethics Faculty* meeting of CEMS—*Global Alliance for Management Education* that we organized in 2014 at Bocconi University in Milan. After many years of decrying, the unethical and unsustainable practices of mainstream business we realized that the time has come to study the *best* of what *business can offer* to the world.

We decided that, along with colleagues from selected CEMS member universities and other friends, we would start to explore the most promising *progressive businesses* in Europe and beyond. By “progressive business” we presaged enterprises that seek to serve society, nature, and future generations, while maintaining their robustness and financial profitability.

We did not want to develop a conventional case book. Instead, we decided to focus on the *business models* of progressive businesses. In our understanding, its business model is the way the company creates (and destroys) values in the broad socio-ecological context. The whole picture view of the mechanism of value creation and destruction is crucial to study the role enterprises play in the society and nature at large.

In 2015, we became involved in *Future Earth*, a major international research platform of academics from a range of disciplines, with a common goal to support and achieve global sustainability. Our project has been included as one of the projects of the Future Earth Finance and Economics Knowledge-Action Network. We are especially pleased that the resulting book of our project is published as the first volume in the newly created *Palgrave Studies in Sustainable Business*—in association with Future Earth.

One of us (Eleanor) just recently visited Antarctica. She learnt there what it means to be a “visitor” in nature. In a deep sense, we are only *temporary visitors* on the Earth. For this reason, all of us should learn the governing rules of our host, respect its values, and organize our businesses accordingly.

It is our hope and ambition that our book on Progressive Business Models can contribute to reinventing business, geared towards engendering sustainability and creating ecologically conscious and ethically minded business organizations.

Dublin, Ireland
Budapest, Hungary

Eleanor O’Higgins
László Zsolnai

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O'Higgins, E.; Zsolnai, L. (Eds.)

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