

BMW Foundation Global Table Marseille
13–16 June 2019

Executive Summary



Objective

The BMW Foundation Global Table in Marseille was designed to create a space for leaders from around the world to come together and become (more) aware of the social transformations driven by digitalization – of how these transformations are linked to them personally and of the multiple ways in which digitalization can be shaped to contribute to social cohesion and be at the service of all. The participants were invited to experience Responsible Leadership as a mindset within the framework of the UN 2030 Agenda as well as a key element of the BMW Foundation Responsible Leaders Network in order to identify possibilities for their personal and professional engagement.

To become aware of how digitalization can be shaped to contribute to just and inclusive societies and identify possibilities for personal engagement within the framework of the UN 2030 Agenda and as part of the BMW Foundation Responsible Leaders Network.

Discussion

Participants shared their experiences and perspectives on digital transformation and its consequences, focusing on some of the most urgent questions at the intersection of digitalization and resilience: How does digitalization challenge societies and what do societies need to become more resilient? What barriers keep digital transformation from contributing to inclusive and just societies? What do Responsible Leaders need to contribute?

Shifts in power, inequality in participation, and transparency in governance were just some of the topics raised: Based on the assumption that data equals power, participants dealt with the ownership of data and the need to democratize data. One important question was how one could raise awareness for the value and vulnerability linked to data by making the consequences of people's digital actions more visible. In terms of greater transparency, participants discussed the concept of liquid democracy and other new processes to build consensus in the political realm. Against this background, the question of inclusion and equality in participation gained key importance: How can we include as many people as possible in the digital transformation of our societies? With regard to responsible leadership, participants said that it was necessary to diversify leadership, to listen to those that are often not listened to, to be curious and build interconnectedness, and to be able to adapt to the speed of the digital transformation while building inclusive and just societies.

Building on this shared understanding, the focus then shifted towards the future and the SDGs as a framework for this future. In a workshop, participants were invited to envision sustainable futures and to start imagining what the future could and should look like on the basis of certain societal megatrends and technological developments. Building on these

imaginations, they discussed the probability and desirability of the different scenarios and explored personal fields of action in shaping these futures.

The important role of leaders who take responsibility to shape the digital transformation in such a way that it serves all and contributes to stable, just, and inclusive societies was also underlined in a conversation with three young international fellows working at Marseille's thecamp on impact-driven projects, the so-called Hivers. When asked how the younger generation sees the elders' role in helping them shape their future, the three young entrepreneurs asked the Global Table participants to be open, curious, and considerate of the ideas and imaginations of the younger generation. They/The older generation should lead by sharing their experiences, serving as supportive "door openers," and being open to new forms of responsible leadership, and thus engage in real cross-generational collaborations.

Ideas for Action

From the newly established connections among the participants, there emerged a huge motivation and many ideas to take collaborative action within the BMW Foundation Responsible Leaders Network:

1. The gamified method to "Envision Sustainable Futures" was enthusiastically embraced by the participants, and many plan to reuse the game for their teams and organizations and to share this unusual approach to imagining, thinking, and discussing current societal and technological developments with an open mind for new solutions.
2. Starting in the session with the Hivers, some participants have committed to supporting the Hivers' projects on data-based urban planning and sustainable fashion and have invited the Hivers to draw on their knowledge and networks. To follow up on these contacts and connections, the Hivers will also participate in the Berlin Global Forum.



Participants included leaders from NATO Headquarters, the UNRWA Operations in Gaza, The Supreme Court in India, as well as from social enterprises, civil society, arts and culture organizations, and businesses from 13 different countries. They all participated in their personal capacity.

Testimonials

“It goes without saying that Marseille was a life-changing and amazing experience. I absolutely loved every moment. I am honored to be invited to be a BMW Foundation Responsible Leader and I accept the invitation!”

Allison Gibson, Director of Paintbox Catering & Bistro, Toronto, Canada

“I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for an incredible human and professional experience and to salute you for the work that you do and specifically this fantastic gathering you have put together – Inspiring venue, very special bouquet of participants put in motion by a flow of activities that cultivated a deep yet playful spirit. I got back home touched and humbled by this experience.”

Névine Camel-Toueg, Co-Founder of Sycamore Consulting, Brussels, Belgium

“I [...] send deep gratitude for the exciting experience your team curated. It was truly a much-needed intervention that reminded me to trust myself, and above all, it emphasized the beauty and potential of carving out intentional space to cultivate kind, compassionate, and the most fun relationships.”

Nikki Cajucom, Founder of Cajucom Consulting, Toronto, Canada

“It was a tremendous honor to be immersed in the sheer energy and passion for responsible leadership in Marseille. It felt like finding one's tribe and being part of a movement. God knows how the world is longing for responsible, kind and sincere leadership, diverse, inclusive and creative leadership, and the BMW Foundation seem to have the recipe.”

Dedo Baranshamaje, Director of Innovation at Segal Family Foundation, Bujumbura, Burundi