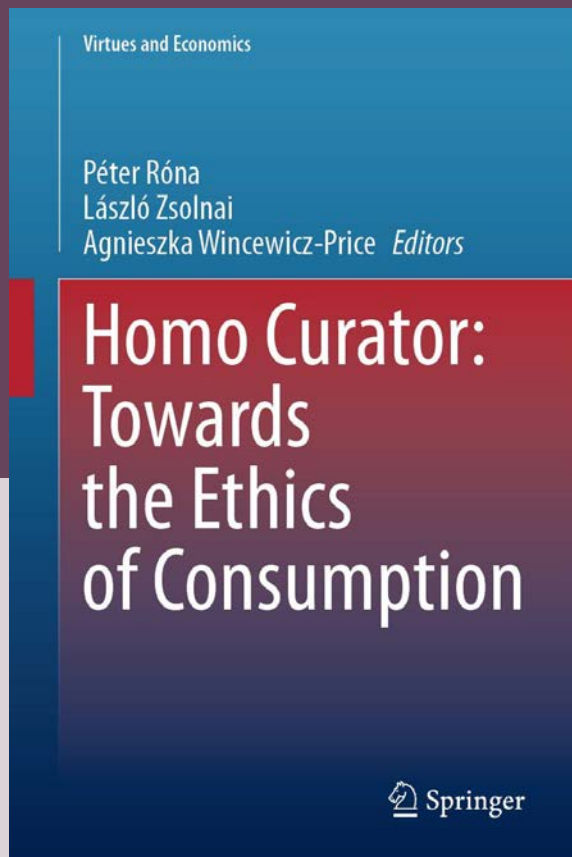


# ETHICS & BUSINESS

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BUSINESS ETHICS CENTER — 2024

CORVINUS INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES · CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

## HOMO CURATOR: TOWARDS THE ETHICS OF CONSUMPTION



The book “Homo Curator: Towards the Ethics of Consumption” edited by Peter Rona, Laszlo Zsolnai, and Agnieszka Wincewicz-Price was published by Springer in 2024.

This book explores today’s consumerist culture and the environmental damage it has brought about. The book is an outcome of the symposium on “The Ethics of Consumption” organized and hosted by the Las Casas Institute at the Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford as part of its Economics as a Moral Science Program.

The book takes on two contemporary problems: the human weakness and capacity for wrong-doing, and the failure of modern economic theory to account for the moral character of human behavior and its implicit encouragement of gluttonous life-styles. In a time when grand political schemes are proposed to revive the sustainability of the global economy, the authors of the papers collected in this book highlight the need for moral renewal without which the structural reforms are bound to fail at producing the desired outcome.

Topics of the book include the meaning and sources of avarice, the attempt to define what is enough, and the exploration of philosophical and theological perspectives that can serve as building blocks for the ethics of consumption.

Contributors of the book are Joshtrom Kureethadam (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Vatican City), Stefano Zamagni (University of Bologna, Italy), Margaret Atkins (Canoness of St. Augustine in the community at Boarbank Hall in Cumbria, Grange-over-Sands, UK), Laszlo Zsolnai (Business Ethics Center, Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary), Laura Baritz (Sapientia College of Theology of Religious Orders, Budapest, Hungary), David C. Rose (University of Missouri–St. Louis, USA), Geoffrey Brennan (Australian National University, Canberra), Hayden Wilkinson (University of Oxford, UK), Peter Rona (University of Oxford, UK), Edward Skidelsky (University of Exeter, UK), Dominic Burbidge (University of Oxford, UK), Joseph Rice (Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, USA), and Eors Szathmary (Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary).

Webpage of the book: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-51700-6>

# CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

## THE AWAKENED CAMPUS GLOBAL CONFERENCE

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Awakened Campus Global Conference was held on March 28, 2024. The conference was organized by the Spirituality Mind Body Institute of the Teachers College, Columbia University, the European SPES Institute, and the Business Ethics Center of the Corvinus University of Budapest.

COLUMBIA  
UNIVERSITY



*Keynote speakers and panelists of the conference included*

- Lisa Miller | Columbia University
- Laszlo Zsolnai | Corvinus University of Budapest
- Elisabeth Mistur & Suza Scalora | Columbia University
- David Lorimer | The Galileo Commission, London
- Cheryl Hunt | University of Exeter
- Hitendra Wadhwa | Columbia Business School
- Madhumita Chatterji | ABBS Business School, Bangalore
- Knut Ims | NHH Norwegian School of Economics, Bergen
- Steven Rockefeller | Middlebury College & Earth Charter
- Julio Bermudez | The Catholic University of America
- Bob Thurman | Columbia University
- Nazar Yasin | Sol and SMBI
- Alexander Moreira-Almeida | Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil
- Cassandra Vieten | University of California – San Diego
- Laura Tuach | Harvard Divinity School
- Varun Soni | University of Southern California, Los Angeles

More than 200 faculty members, scholars, and students participated in the conference online from the USA, Europe, and Asia.

*The main thematic blocks of the conference were as follows:*

Integrating Spirituality  
into Higher Education

Business & Management  
Education

Spirituality Realized  
in Higher Education

Medicine and Spirituality

Spiritual Development  
in Students

**For more information see: <https://spiritualityineducation.org/awakened-campus-global-2024/>**

## EUROPEAN SPES CONFERENCE



The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the European SPES Institute entitled “Spirituality & Business in the Anthropocene Era” was held at the Corvinus University of Budapest on June 20–22, 2024, in Budapest, Hungary.

Co-organizing partners of the conference included the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; Nyenrode Business University; Grenoble School of Management; ABBS School of Management, Bangalore; S.P. Jain Institute of Management & Research, Mumbai; and the Macau Ricci Institute, University of St. Joseph, Macau.



Sponsors of the conference included the Corvinus University of Budapest, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung – Hungary, and UCSIA – St. Ignatius University Centre, Antwerp.



The Business Ethics Society – Budapest provided administrative support for organizing the conference.

The conference was a good opportunity to reflect on the prospects of spirituality in business and society as the new reality of the Anthropocene era emerged in the form of multiple crises.

As consumption and human numbers have risen, humankind has ushered in a new era called the “Anthropocene,” in which we are altering the biogeochemistry of the planet itself, destabilizing climate and influencing co-evolution at the planetary level. The Anthropocene is a regrettable exit from the placid past ten thousand years – the Holocene – a period of climate stability in which human civilization arose.

The dramatic symptoms of the Anthropocene – climate change, biodiversity loss, the collapse of the ecosystems, wellbeing deficiencies, rising global inequality, and migration – indicate that humanity may approach a point of no-return where the survival of our civilization is at stake.

While the Anthropocene is reshaping human consciousness and human-nature bonds, there is another big force that is racing to alter the human spirit and consciousness: Artificial Intelligence.

What is the role of spirituality in such an unprecedented situation, and what business and other social institutions can do to avoid further catastrophes? What should responsible professionals do? What is meaningful action today? How should we change our way of life? These and similar questions constitute the grand themes of the conference.

65 scholars and practitioners participated in the conference from Europe, Asia, and the USA.

#### *Keynote lectures included*

- Andras Ocsai and Laszlo Zsolnai (Corvinus University of Budapest): *The Economics of Pope Francis & The Economy of Francesco*
- Stephan Rothlin, SJ (The Macau Ricci Institute, St. Joseph University, Macau): *The Shift of Dialoguing with China: Sustainable Competitiveness*
- Peter Rona (University of Oxford): *Homo Curator: Towards the Ethics of Consumption*
- Surya Tahora & Jagdish Rattanani (SP Jain Institute of Management & Research, Mumbai, India): *An Approach to Embedding Indian Spiritual Traditions in Business School Curriculum*
- Laurent Ledoux and Moses Garelik (UniOne Foundation, Brussels, Belgium): *UniOne Centers: Leadership & Spirituality in Practice*

## COLUMBIA – CORVINUS WORKSHOP



*Lisa Miller and Laszlo Zsolnai  
at Corvinus Institute for  
Advanced Studies*

On July 8, 2024, the Business Ethics Center organized a workshop with Columbia University Spirituality, Mind, Body Institute on “Awakened Brain & Awakened Campus” at the Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies.

Zoltan Oszkar Szanto, Dean of the Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies opened the workshop. Lisa Miller, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Columbia University Spirituality, Mind, Body Institute presented a lecture on “The Neuroscience of Spirituality & The Awakened Campus Initiative,” while Laszlo Zsolnai, Professor and Director of the Business Ethics Center gave a talk on “The Awakened Brain in Business Education.”

An interview with Lisa Miller on the workshop can be read here:

<https://www.uni-corvinus.hu/post/hir/columbia-corvinus-workshop-on-awakened-brain-awakened-campus-interview/?lang=en>

**TEACHERS COLLEGE**  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## BUSINESS EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET

Together with The Club of Rome, the Business Ethics Center organized a workshop on “Business Education and the Future of the Planet” on November 11, 2024, at the Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies in Budapest.

Paul Shrivastava, Co-President of The Club of Rome, delivered a keynote lecture on “Transforming Business Education – A Systems View,” while Laszlo Zsolnai gave a lecture on “Business Education and Transformational Learning.” They agreed that business education should be reformed toward transdisciplinarity and giving room for the whole-person development of the students. The Anthropocene era requires combining professional knowledge with ecological sensitivity and humanistic ethics.



The workshop continued with a panel discussion on “How to Renew Business Education.”

*Panelists included the following faculty members of the Corvinus University of Budapest:*

- Daniel Havran | Dean of Masters Programs & Associate Professor of the Department of Corporate Finance
- Judit Gaspar | Head of the Department of Decision Sciences
- Anna Hidegh | Head of the Department of Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Development
- Jozsef Veress | Assistant Professor, Department of Information Systems
- Agnes Zsoka | Professor, Department of Sustainability Management and Environmental Economics

More than 50 Corvinus faculty members participated in the workshop, which served to catalyze joint thinking on the renewal of business education for responding to the grand challenges of the Anthropocene era.

# PRESENTATIONS

## THE BUSINESS OF INFO-COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Laszlo Zsolnai delivered a lecture on “The Business of Info-Communication Technologies” at the conference *Toward a Systemic Concept of Attention for the Attention Economy, Using Buddhist and Western Ethics* organized by the Eindhoven University of Technology on February 6–7, 2024.

In his lecture Zsolnai argued that info-communication technology companies represent a new form of corporate transgression as they want to devoid human beings of their free will and consciousness. Business ethics can offer

a number of counteracting strategies against the practices of these companies. Zsolnai concluded that we need info-communication technologies that are consistent with our spiritual nature and liberate us for valuable functioning and being.



## CONSCIOUS BUSINESS MODELS

Laszlo Zsolnai gave a talk on “Conscious Business Models” for the Spanish Conscious Capitalism Network on March 6, 2024.

Zsolnai suggested three defining characteristics of conscious businesses, namely (i) they give priority to intrinsic motivation over extrinsic one, (ii) they are orientated toward the common good, and (iii) they measure success in multi-dimensional, holistic terms. Zsolnai presented the cases of Patagonia, Triodos Bank, and Organic India as successful models of conscious

business. Finally, he concluded that conscious (spiritual-based) business gives a chance for self-realization and serving others while generating profit for development and growth.



## MANAGEMENT, SPIRITUALITY, AND RELIGION RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

Laszlo Zsolnai gave a talk on “Ethics Towards the Researchable” at the Management, Spirituality, and Religion Research Group of the Academy of Management Colloquium on June 8, 2024.

Zsolnai presented the main research directions and topics of the European SPES Institute, namely Life-Affirmative Ethics, Spiritual-based Entrepreneurship, Hindu Spirituality in Management, Buddhist Economics & Bhutan, Spiritual Critique of Transhumanism, Art and Aesthetics for Sustainability, and Peace Economics.

These initiatives aim to foster developments in practical and professional fields that serve ecological and human wellbeing by emphasizing the primacy of the “spiritual” over the “material.”



## PRESENTATIONS AT THE EUROPEAN SPES CONFERENCE

Members of the Business Ethics Center gave presentations at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the European SPES Institute entitled *Spirituality & Business in the Anthropocene Era* at the Corvinus University of Budapest on June 20–22, 2024 in Budapest.



- In his presentation on “Ecological Consciousness and Sustainable Food Production,” Andras Ocsai reviewed the literature on ecological consciousness and the problems of food production in the Anthropocene era. He presented real-world examples of ecological conscious production organizations and places such as including Green Monday (Hong Kong), Sekem (Egypt), Park Slope Food Coop (USA), Slow Food (Italy), Farm2Fork (Hungary), Krishna Valley (Hungary), Montreal (Canada), Tel Aviv (Israel), Milan (Italy), El Hierro (Canary Islands, Spain), Sikkim (India) and Costa Rica.
- In his presentation on “Teaching Business Ethics in the Anthropocene,” Gabor Kovacs underlined that business ethics education should integrate not only different scientific, but also various spiritual perspectives. It means that business ethics education should (i) analyze crucial corporate ethics cases from multiple perspectives, (ii) introduce innovative and progressive business models that serve human flourishing and ecological regeneration, and (iii) help students develop new business and entrepreneurial ideas that fit in the reality of the Anthropocene era.
- In his presentation on “Community-Centered Livelihood Transformation” Tamas Veress argued that the challenges of the Anthropocene era necessitate a fundamental shift in how economic activities intersect with the web of life. His presentation introduced real-life cases (Health in Harmony and Lucas Aerospace), which have important implications for the transformative power of community-centered approaches.
- The poster presentation by Zoltan Valcsicsak on “Bodhisattva Entrepreneurship in Bhutan” underlined that Bodhisattva entrepreneurship in Bhutan is exemplified through various businesses that operate with a commitment to compassion, sustainability, and social responsibility. Valcsicsak argued that Bodhisattva entrepreneurs integrate ancient spiritual values into contemporary business models and address societal and environmental challenges while promoting innovation and ethical behavior. These entrepreneurs can serve as inspiring models for creating a more sustainable and compassionate future, not only in Bhutan but also globally.
- The poster presentation by Kalman Kelemen on “Rajarshi & Vedic Leadership in the Anthropocene” showed that the spiritual-based Indian leadership concepts suggest developing leaders who are not only effective in their leadership roles but also believe in their accountability for right actions and hold a high sense of interpersonal sensitivity toward the people they manage. He argued that this kind of leadership is applicable and much needed in the Anthropocene era.
- The poster presentation by Zoltan Rozsa on “The Vegan Revolution: Impact of Ethical Business Practices on Consumer Choices in the Anthropocene” illustrated the impact of integrating vegan principles into business operations to encourage ethical consumer behavior. Through four cases of innovative vegan enterprises (Miomajo, The Planteen, Beyond Meat, and Impossible Foods), the presentation showcased how businesses employ innovation to replace traditional animal products with plant-based alternatives.

## THE ECONOMY OF FRANCESCO ACADEMY WORKSHOP

Tamas Veress presented his research project, “Principles and Models of Community Economies,” at the Economy of Francesco Academy workshop on July 15, 2024.

The lecture contrasted community economies with growthism, these radically different approaches of value creation and ways to organize economic activities. Growthism focuses on privately appropriable rents and profit-generating arrangements, often neglecting ecological sustainability and genuine human needs. In contrast, social arrangements applying the principles and models of community economies focus on genuine social needs, resource sharing, participatory practices, material sufficiency, nonviolent technological solutions, and common property ownership design.

Tamas Veress argued that community economies embed livelihood supporting systems into local communities, allowing locals to avoid dependence on exploitative and harmful arrangements while gaining power and autonomy to co-organize crucial dimensions of their material necessities suited to their needs. Community economies invite a diversity of different cosmologies, rationalities, and ethics to organize economic activities, addressing a wide range of socioecological ills. He illustrated the principles and models of community economies by two case studies. Health in Harmony is an international non-governmental organization operating health clinics in Indonesia, Brazil, and Madagascar to save rainforests by helping local villagers adopt livelihoods not dependent on illegal logging. Sustainable Food Network, a hypothetical system consisting of real-world organizations aiming to produce food through ecologically sustainable and socially just methods.



## BUSINESS IN THE ANTHROPOCENE



On August 13–17, 2024, Gabor Kovacs participated in the NaKuHel Symposium entitled *Nature and Culture as Public Health in a Changing World* in Vaeroy, Norway. The symposium was part of the Bodo 2024 European Capital of Culture program.

Gabor Kovacs presented a lecture jointly developed with Laszlo Zsolnai on “Business in the Anthropocene.” It was argued that to achieve meaningful change in the humanity-nature nexus we have to reinvent the way business functions. Through a deep transformation, businesses can become an ecologically conscious agent which operate within limits, that is, use only their “fair earth share” and contribute to the richness of life on Earth.

*Vaeroy, Norway*



### Human Development & Capability Association

Tamas Veress delivered a talk on “Community Economy Models” at the *Human Development and Capability Association Conference* in Kolkata, India, from September 24–26, 2024. He contrasted two radically different organizational models. Materialistic value orientation focuses on profit maximization, while community economy models prioritize securing access to basic needs.

Veress highlighted that community-based organizations allow resource sharing, participatory practices, and non-monetary interactions, while relying on technologies that are compatible with these principles. Illustrating these organizational features, Veress discussed the Cooperative for Ethical Financing in Croatia, an ethical fintech network that finances projects meeting requirements of ecological, social, and economic criteria. Also, he presented the case of Buurtzorg India, which empowers rural women by educating them as caregivers to provide affordable healthcare services. Community economy models deserve attention due to their capacity to nurture the prosocial inclinations among those involved.



## VEGANISM IN HUNGARY

Zoltan Rozsa presented a paper on “Exploring Perceptions of Veganism in Hungary: Netnographic Study and Marketing Insights” at the 11<sup>th</sup> SUCSON International Conference on November 21, 2024, at the Indian Institute of Management in Shillong, India. The theme of the conference was *Climate Positive World*.

Rozsa emphasized that by targeting non-vegan consumers, vegan companies can significantly help to reduce the consumption of animal-based products. This, in turn,

can lead to a decrease in the ecological degradation associated with the current global food production. However, reaching the non-vegan consumer segment poses challenges, partly due to the prevalent negative attitudes toward vegan products and veganism as a moral or philosophical stance. The lecture explored how Hungarian consumers perceive veganism and vegan products and provided a solid foundation for enhancing marketing strategies.



भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान शिलाँग  
Indian Institute of Management  
Shillong



## IS SUSTAINABILITY SUSTAINABLE?

On November 26, 2024, Laszlo Zsolnai participated in a panel discussion on “Is Sustainability Sustainable?” at the Dharma Gate Buddhist College of Budapest. Other participants of the panel were ecological economist Alexandra Koves from Corvinus University of Budapest and atmospheric chemist Andras Gelencser, former Rector of the Pannon University of Veszprem. The panel was chaired by Gabor Karsai, Rector of the Dharma Gate Buddhist College and Managing Director of Mind & Life Europe.



Panelists discussed the meaning and relevance of sustainability in today’s context. Laszlo Zsolnai argued that “sustainability” was a relevant concept till the 1970s, but since then, it has gradually lost its meaning. Today it serves mostly as “lip service” for hiding environmentally destructive corporate, political, and social practices. The more relevant concepts today are ecological resilience and regenerative practices. In his view Buddhism can contribute to the realization of these approaches as Buddhism is based on “non-self” and cultivates compassion and care for all sentient beings (human and non-human alike).

## WORLD SOIL DAY



On World Soil Day, December 5, 2024, Andras Ocsai participated in a panel discussion on the importance of the soil in human and planetary health at Corvinus University of Budapest. Other participants of the panel were ecological economist Orsolya Lazanyi from Cargonomia and Environmental Social Science Research Group, Matthew Hayes, farmer, founder of the Zsambok Biogarden, Aniko Palikne and Ferenc Palik, owners of the Szapar Ecofarm and Biomill, and Aron Torok, head of Department of Agricultural Economics at Corvinus University of Budapest.

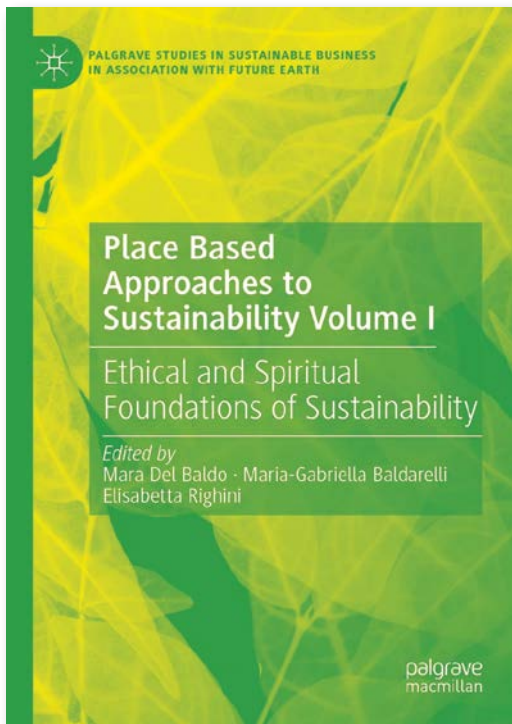
After watching the film “Living Bread,” panelists discussed how the entire value chain shapes humanity’s relationship with soil and food, the current status and future prospects of organic production and environmentally conscious processing, and the importance of local products, the farmers’ market model and students’ participation.

Andras Ocsai argued that during the last centuries, humans gradually became physically, psychologically, and spiritually separated from the non-human nature, including the soil. The weakened living connections to nature and the decreasing ecological consciousness contributed to the massive degradation of nature and the health of the soil. To overcome the challenges of our era we need to understand that we are all part of the web of life maintained by the soil. In order to provide the whole of humanity with healthy food, local, organic, regenerative food production is indispensable. Business school curricula should also include opportunities for the students to physically connect with nature and the soil as well.



# PUBLICATIONS

## THE COMMON GOOD UNIVERSITY



Together with Mara Del Baldo, Gherardo Girardi, Hayden Hubbard, and Knut J. Ims, Tamas Veress published a paper on “The Common Good University: The Search for an Alternative Path for Business School Education” in the book *Place Based Approaches to Sustainability. Volume I Ethical and Spiritual Foundations of Sustainability* (edited by Mara Del Baldo, Maria-Gabriella Baldarelli, & Elisabetta Righini, 2024. London, Palgrave, pp. 277–312.)

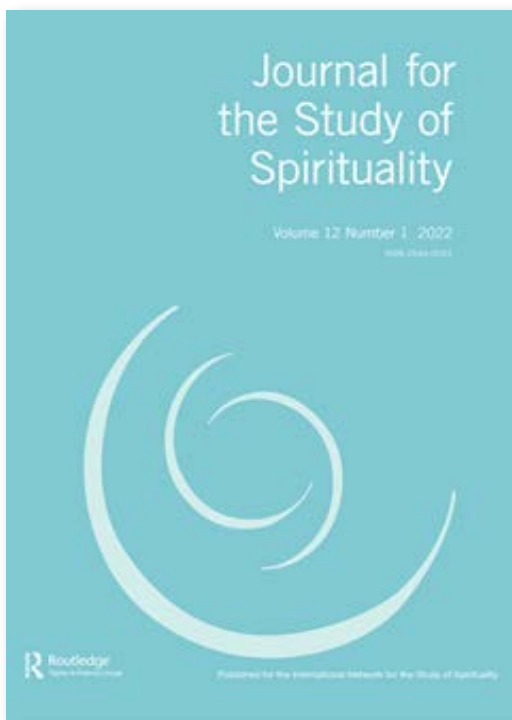
In their paper, Tamas Veress and his colleagues underline that business plays an essential role in shaping global trends, connecting academia to industry, and fostering future leaders. Many critics have pointed to the primary emphasis on the career-enhancing, salary-increasing aspects of business education. It is time to rethink the educational concepts that frame today’s institutions, placing more emphasis on creativity, compassion, collaboration, and community while moving away from the current praxis that undermines pro-ecological and pro-social behavior.

The authors argue that universities should educate young people to lead their lives in a troubled world in the interest of the common good. They discuss what the “common good” is and develop a vision

of the “common good university” based upon universal human and ecological values. With this holistic model in mind, they survey the efforts of five higher educational institutions in Hungary, Italy, Norway, the UK, and the USA, which seek to embrace at least some elements of the common good orientation. The insights from the case studies contribute to the discussion on how the common good can be operationalized for universities and business schools.

**Webpage of the book:** <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-41606-4>

## SPIRITUALITY IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION



In his review article on “Spirituality in Architectural Education,” Laszlo Zsolnai analyzes the Walton Critic Program at The Catholic University of America (*Journal for the Study of Spirituality*, 2024, 14(1), pp. 92–94).

The Walton Critic Program is directed by Julio Bermudez and recruits world-class architects to tutor graduate students in architecture. The program has a curriculum that addresses, facilitates, and develops spiritual sensibilities, worldviews, skills, and experiences through architecture. By providing students with role models, the Walton Critic Program demonstrates that architecture can assist the spiritual growth of humanity. The program is centered around the fundamental question: What is the purpose of architecture? The answer is that the purpose of architecture is not designing and building things but creating a home for humanity in a physical, ecological, social, and spiritual sense. Architectural education should reflect this mission of architecture.

**Paper available at:** <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20440243.2024.2330624>

## BUDDHISM AND RIGHT CONSUMPTION

The paper by Laszlo Zsolnai on “Buddhism and Right Consumption” was published in the book *“Homo Curator: Towards the Ethics of Consumption”* (edited by Peter Rona, Laszlo Zsolnai, & Agnieszka Wincewicz-Price, 2024. Springer, pp. 53–57).

The paper emphasizes that the ultimate goal of a Buddhist life is to reach enlightenment and to put an end to suffering. From this perspective, human life can be defined as inner development, that is, ethical and spiritual growth that requires only a minimum level of material consumption (food, clothes, shelter, education, and medicine). The



paper argues that Buddhism demands simplifying and reorienting our desires through meditation, self-reflection, and social dialogue to develop “right consumption” patterns. Right consumption can be understood as conscious consumption, which is (i) wise (it supports the genuine well-being of individuals), (ii) non-violent (does not involve hurting other sentient beings), and (iii) compassionate (it helps others to satisfy their needs).

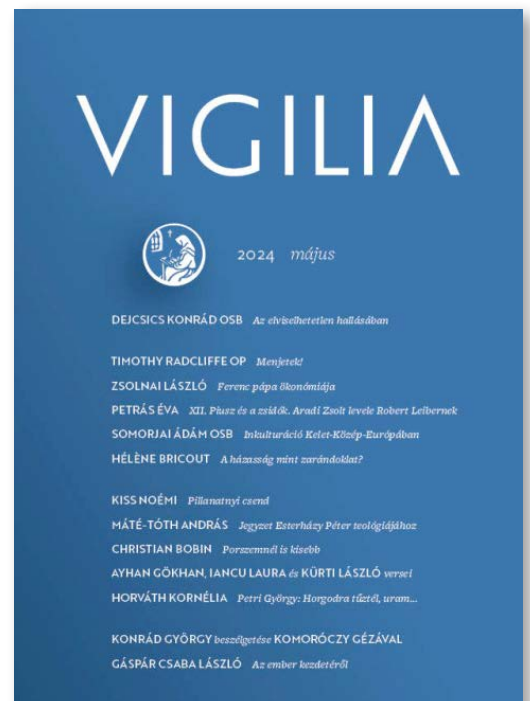
Buddhism suggests that we should directly evaluate and compare the wellbeing of people in relation to their quality of life – a proposition that matches with the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen. In this approach, it is understood that people require the basic goods and services considered essential for their wellbeing, and that their quality of life is based upon their ability to achieve a meaningful life, including nurturing the human spirit.

## THE ECONOMICS OF POPE FRANCIS



Laszlo Zsolnai published a paper on “The Economics of Pope Francis” in Hungarian in *Vigilia* in May 2024. The paper analyses the development of Pope Francis’ economic views from the time of his election to the present day.

First, the paper briefly shows the relationship of St. Francis of Assisi, who inspired Pope Francis, to the economy and then explores – among other documents – the main economic messages of the papal encyclical *Laudato si’*. Finally, it presents Pope Francis’ Economy of Francesco initiative and discusses further opportunities for development.



## Twenty Years of European SPES

2004-2024



Leuven – Budapest

The book *Twenty Years of European SPES*, edited by Laszlo Zsolnai, was published in 2024. The book documents the activities of the European SPES Institute from 2004 to 2024. It presents all the conferences that the European SPES Institute organized and the main publications it produced.

Based on the twenty years of work of the European SPES Institute, the following propositions are derived.

- (1) Religion and spirituality are not the same. Religion is an institutionalized approach to relate humanity to the supernatural or transcendental, and to find fulfillment.
- (2) Spirituality involves the multiform search for meaning that interconnects people with all living beings and God or Ultimate Reality outside of, or in addition to traditional institutions.
- (3) Although spirituality is personal and subjective, it is not a private matter. Spirituality can be considered as a public good because the spiritual capital of society influences how economic and social affairs are organized and conducted.
- (4) The opportunistic use of ethics is often counterproductive because it is perceived as lying and cheating by the stakeholders, who will react accordingly.
- (5) Spirituality can reduce the temptation to activate moral disengagement mechanisms for rationalizing personal and organizational wrongdoing.
- (6) Only genuine ethics works. Ethics brings material benefits for people and organizations if and only if it is practiced for its own sake and not for producing material gains.
- (7) Personalism should be redefined to embrace ecology and ecological values.
- (8) The concept of the Common Good should be extended to include the good of nature and the good of future generations. Hence, we can arrive at the notion of the Commonwealth of Life.
- (9) Sustainability requires acknowledging the intrinsic value of nature and introducing frugal production and consumption patterns.
- (10) Spiritual-based, transformational leadership creates the greatest possible autonomy for groups and communities and cultivates the intrinsic motivation of people to act.
- (11) Actors who are intrinsically motivated to serve the greater good and define success in multi-dimensional, holistic terms can survive and prosper in competitive environments.
- (12) Material value orientation destroys human and ecological wellbeing. Only spiritual value orientation can produce real wellbeing for people and for the rest of creation.
- (13) Spiritual-based humanism provides a solid, non-negotiable foundation for human dignity, equality, and respect realizing that we are all Children of God or connected to the Ultimate Consciousness.

**The book is freely available here:**

<https://laszlo-zsolnai.com/twenty-years-of-european-spes-2024-2024/>

## IMAGES OF HUMANITY IN THE LIGHT OF DEEP ACCESSIBILITY

In June 2024, Jacint Farkas published a paper in Hungarian on “Images of Humanity in the Light of Deep Accessibility” in *Fogyatékoság és Társadalom* (2025. No. 1). The paper presents Western and Buddhist perspectives to highlight the barrier-generating and barrier-free nature of human beings. The study is hermeneutic, as it seeks

to understand and make sense of phenomena. The paper suggests that the practice of participatory teaching used in special education can be applied to the teaching of philosophy and philosophy-related subjects, since the development of a mutually supportive relationship between students and teachers is a prerequisite for joint thinking.



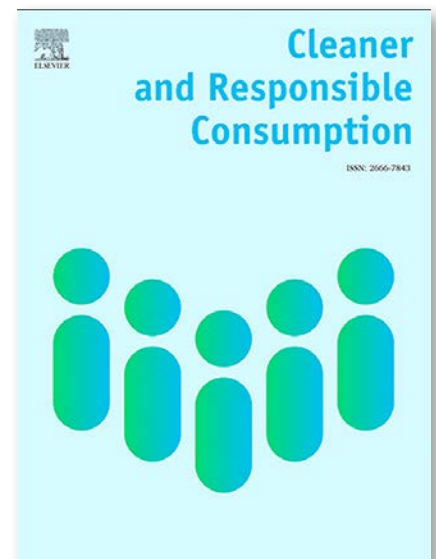
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## SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE PRACTICES

Together with Gabriella Kiss, Orsolya Lazanyi, Tunde Taxner, and Agnes Neulinger, Tamas Veress published a paper on “The Transformation of Sustainable Lifestyle Practices in Ecoclubs” in *Cleaner and Responsible Consumption* (Vol. 13. June 2024, 100189).

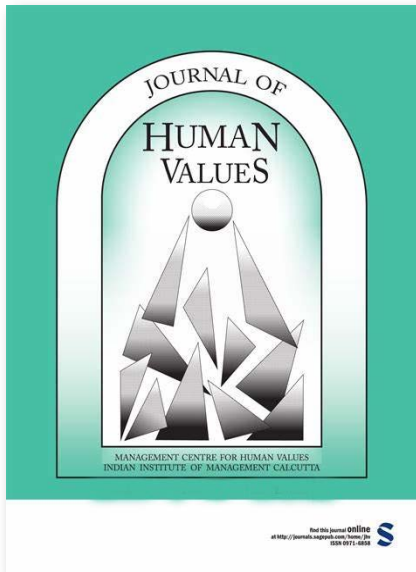
The authors have been organizing eco-clubs, where students are invited to develop ecologically conscious everyday practices and lifestyles. The paper analyzes the transformative potential of eco-clubs, in which participants act as co-researchers, collaboratively planning, acting, and reflecting on their habits and lifestyles. The structure of the process fosters autonomy, community-based learning, and knowledge sharing. Based on participant interviews and reflection diaries, Veress and his colleagues argue that the transformative power of ecoclubs supports significant changes in participants’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding sustainable lifestyles.

The lifestyle and consumption habits of individuals are crucial in the question of ecological sustainability. Current consumption patterns need to be changed, requiring societies to shift cultural norms and create new consumer habits that are within planetary boundaries. In the practices of teaching sustainable consumption in higher education, participatory and action-oriented research and teaching methods can facilitate the transition towards a more sustainable lifestyle for students. In this paper, the authors present a method operating at the boundary of education and research, the so-called ecoclubs, based on the characteristics of cooperative inquiry and transformative learning. Ecoclubs enable systematic and democratic knowledge creation to achieve concrete social change. In this paper, the authors explore how the method can promote transformation in the knowledge, attitude, and everyday practices of the participating students regarding a sustainable lifestyle. To analyze the transformative potential of ecoclubs, the authors used qualitative content analysis on 38 semi-structured interviews and reflection diaries of co-researchers of ecoclubs. The results show that according to the members of ecoclubs, the most important characteristics of this non-formal education are the community, autonomy of decision-making, knowledge sharing, and experience-based format. From the students’ point of view, these characteristics can contribute to their higher level of engagement with sustainability and additional changes in their lifestyle.



**Paper available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666784324000226>**

## HOW TO RENEW BUSINESS ETHICS EDUCATION?



The paper on “How to Renew Business Ethics Education?” by Laszlo Zsolnai was published in the *Journal of Human Values* (2024, 30(3), pp. 252–256).

The paper starts with the observation that business ethics education is losing credibility worldwide. This is partly due to the experience that teaching ethics in business schools does not necessarily help future professionals to be more ethical in their business activities. The paper agrees with Claus Dierksmeier’s criticism of conventional business ethics education and suggests that business ethics teaching should be renewed both in contents and pedagogy. The article advances a position that, in a renewed form, business ethics education is much needed in business schools as it can give room for transformational learning and moral growth for both students and faculty.



## BUSINESS ETHICS IN HUNGARY

The Business Ethics Center conducted a survey on business ethics teaching, research, and training in Hungary. The project was part of the Global Survey of Business Ethics initiated and coordinated by the International Society of Business, Economics, and Ethics (ISBEE) in 2022–2024. (Robinson, B. & Enderle, G. (Eds.) *The Global Survey of Business Ethics. Teaching, Research and Training. Volume 3. Europe*. Globethics, Geneva. pp. 219–262).

The report reviews the existing literature on business ethics in Hungary since 2011. It identifies the most striking business ethics-related problems in Hungary, namely corruption and crony capitalism, lack of transparency in public decisions and policies, unequal wealth creation, and reindustrialization and anti-migration policies. It maps out the themes in the teaching of business ethics and presents the most important activities, topics, and issues in business ethics research in Hungary.

The report lists the main topics in training on business ethics, such as business and human rights, business sustainability, business and wealth creation, religion and spirituality, diversity, leadership, and ethics management. The report also presents the main business ethics-related issues Hungary faces with in the years to come. They

include restoring democratic institutions and the rule of law, reforming the tax system, managing the energy transition, and financing sustainability transformations.

The report concludes that business ethics can be considered a mature discipline in Hungary. It has a well-established educational and research infrastructure, and in some fields, it produces internationally recognized, innovative results. However, the impact of business ethics on the current economic, social, and political affairs in Hungary is low. This low impact is due to the insensitivity and disinterest of the leaders of mainstream business, political, and social institutions. To increase the impact of business ethics in Hungary requires using new, creative strategies both in dissemination and knowledge generation.

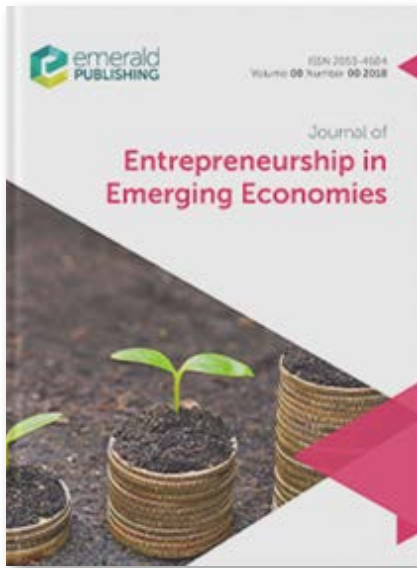


**ISBEE**  
International Society  
of Business,  
Economics and Ethics

**The report is available at:**

<https://globethics.net/publications/global-survey-business-ethics-2022-2024-1>

## SPIRITUALLY INFORMED ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIONS



Together with Srinath Dissanayake and Kathryn Pavlovich, Gabor Kovacs published a paper on “Improving Community Vitality: Spiritually Informed Entrepreneurial Actions” in the *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies* (October 2024).

The paper depicts how entrepreneurs improve community vitality in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The paper joins the conversation of business spirituality as the study participants were Sri Lankan Buddhist entrepreneurs from the emerging venture context (i.e., from enterprises which are less than 1–10 years old). For the Sri Lankan Buddhist entrepreneurs, to improve community vitality is an essential goal in their business agenda. During the operations of their ventures, this goal is translated into altruistic actions to improve the economic, social, and environmental vitalities of communities. Research findings highlight that in the case of Sri Lankan Buddhist entrepreneurs, altruistic actions are informed by compassion, which is a fundamental value in Buddhism.

Paper available at: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/2053-4604.htm>

## “BILDUNG” AS TRANSFORMATIONAL CONCEPT FOR BUSINESS, ORGANISATION, AND MANAGEMENT



The paper by Wendelin Kupers, Paul Shrivastava, and Laszlo Zsolnai on “Building Practical Wisdom in Business, Organisation and Management through Transformative Civic Education (‘Bildung’)” was published in the *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion* in October, 2024.

This paper revisits the German concept of “Bildung” as a transformative approach to civic education for renewing business and management education and organizational practices to foster both human and non-human flourishing and sustainability. It synthesizes key insights from the literature on practical wisdom and wisdom learning to develop a conception of spiritually informed, embodied wise practice in business, organization, and management.

As a component of transformative civic education, “Bildung” is demonstrated to have significant potential for cultivating the character traits, identity, and capabilities needed to address the profound ecological, economic, social, and cultural challenges of the Anthropocene.

Specifically, the paper establishes a nexus between spirituality and embodied practical wisdom, advocating for more responsible and sustainable business practices and education. The paper argues that by leveraging the tradition of “Bildung,” both business practices and education can be rejuvenated through the development of the whole person within social praxis.

Paper available at: <https://doi.org/10.51327/SOWN9168>

## THE MEANING OF EXISTENTIAL DISABILITY



In November 2024 Jacint Farkas' book on *The Meaning of Existential Disability* was published in Hungarian (*Az egzisztenciális fogyatékoság jelentésvilága*, 2024, L'Harmattan, Budapest).

The book explores the philosophical dimensions of living with a disability. The author uses his own experiences as a person who lives with a disability. This makes it possible to organically combine the existential and the phenomenological dimensions in this study.

The book combines the existential anthropological ideas of the 20th century with the tradition of Buddhism, especially the thinking of Nagarjuna. Jacint Farkas developed an argument that functional disability must be distinguished from existential disability. Functional disability characterizes the life of an individual who lives with a disability, but existential disability characterizes the general human condition.

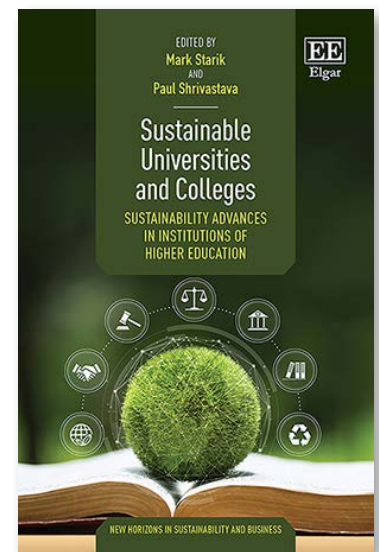
## NEWS

### SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Laszlo Zsolnai wrote an endorsement for the book entitled *Sustainable Universities and Colleges*, edited by Mark Starik and Paul Shrivastava (2024, Edward Elgar).

Zsolnai underlined that institutions of higher education have a unique potential for fostering the sustainability transformation of humanity. The book is a meaningful step in advancing sustainability in higher education. It is a welcome reading for university administrators, faculty, and students interested in the fate of the Earth.

This book provides a set of decision and organizational models for the advancement of sustainability in higher education. International authors present how universities and colleges have attempted to advance sustainability both within and outside of their institutions, and how institutions of higher education can continue to upgrade those efforts to help lead societies toward greater sustainability in the future.



### GABOR KOVACS' PROMOTION



In March 2024, Gabor Kovacs became Associate Professor at the Business Ethics Center, Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies of the Corvinus University of Budapest. Gabor Kovacs continues to teach various business ethics courses and does further research on business ethics in the context of the Anthropocene.





## TAMAS VERESS' PHD DEFENCE

On March 2024, Tamas Veress defended his PhD thesis on “Community-based Organizations and the Challenges of the Anthropocene” with a “summa cum laude” distinction at the Corvinus University of Budapest.



His supervisors were Laszlo Zsolnai and Alexandra Koves. An extended version of his dissertation will be published in the Palgrave Studies in Sustainable Business at Palgrave Macmillan in London in 2025.

## ANDRAS OCSAI'S NEW PHD STUDENT

In September 2024, Ildiko Balla started her PhD studies in the Management Doctoral Program of the Corvinus University of Budapest. Her research topic is “Christian Values in Enterprises.” Andras Ocsai serves as supervisor for this project.



## DANIEL ARENAS' PAPER

Daniel Arenas, Professor at ESADE Business School in Barcelona published a paper on “Experts and Democratic Deliberation: Insights from An Enemy of People” (*Academy of Management Review*, 2024). Daniel Arenas was working on this paper when he was Visiting Fellow at the Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies and the Business Ethics Center in 2023 Spring.

**Paper available at:**  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2023.0219>



ACADEMY OF  
*Management*

## RESEARCH GROUP OF THE YEAR



The Business Ethics Center received the prestigious award of “The Research Group of the Year” from Corvinus University of Budapest on November 7, 2024.

The award was presented by Corvinus Rector, Bruno J. M. T. G. van Pottelsberghe de la Potterie (on the left).

## GABOR KOVACS' NEW PHD SUPERVISION

In December 2024 Gabor Kovacs became co-supervisor of the PhD project of Roland Herke at the University of Szeged. Roland Herke's PhD research topic is "Business Practices of Buddhist Economics."

Roland Herke participated in the "Spirituality & Business in the Anthropocene Era" conference at the Corvinus University of Budapest on June 20–22, 2024 in Budapest. His poster presentation was entitled "Buddhist Economics: Incorporating spirituality into daily individual and business practices for a sustainable future."



## VISIT TO BHUTAN



In November 2024, Zoltan Valcsicsak, PhD scholar at the Business Ethics Center and President of the Hungary–Bhutan Friendship Society, visited Bhutan for a professional trip. He met with leaders of the Loden Foundation who promote Buddhist entrepreneurship in Bhutan. He also studied the project of the Gelephu Mindfulness City initiated by HM Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan. It is an innovative urban development project that aims to integrate economic growth with mindfulness, holistic living, and sustainability.



## PAUL SHRIVASTAVA'S HONORARY DOCTORAL AWARD



The Corvinus University of Budapest awarded Paul Shrivastava with the title of "Honorary Doctor and Professor" on November 12, 2024. Paul Shrivastava is Professor of Management at the Smeal College of Business of Pennsylvania State University and serves as Co-President of The Club of Rome.

Paul Shrivastava has been collaborating with the Business Ethics Center since the early 2010s. He published nine papers and one book with Laszlo Zsolnai.

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bgX90MgMms>



**PennState**



## BLACKFRIARS WORKSHOP

Laszlo Zsolnai participated in the *Economics as a Moral Science Workshop* organized by the Las Casas Institute for Social Justice of the Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford on December 13, 2024.



Participants discussed the main achievements and future challenges of the Economics as a Moral Science Program at Blackfriars. Also, the latest product of the program, the *Homo Curator: Toward the Ethics of Consumption* book was presented for the audience.



## SPONSORS

In 2024 the projects and members of the Business Ethics Center received financial or in-kind support from the following institutions: Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies, Corvinus University of Budapest; Las Casas Institute of the Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford; Spirituality Mind Body Institute of Columbia University; European SPES Institute – Leuven; Vrije University Amsterdam; Nyenrode Business University; Grenoble School of Management; ABBS School of Management, Bangalore; S.P. Jain Institute of Management & Research, Mumbai; Macau Ricci Institute, Macau; Konrad Adenauer Stiftung – Hungary; UCSIA – St. Ignatius University Centre, Antwerp; The Club of Rome; Eindhoven University of Technology; Spanish Conscious Capitalism Network; Management, Spirituality, and Religion Research Group of the Academy of Management; Economy of Francesco Academy – Assisi; Nord University; Bodo 2024 European Capital of Culture Program; Indian Institute of Management – Shillong; Dharma Gate Buddhist College of Budapest; International Society of Business, Economics, and Ethics (ISBEE); and the Business Ethics Society – Budapest.

  
Business Ethics Center  
CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

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