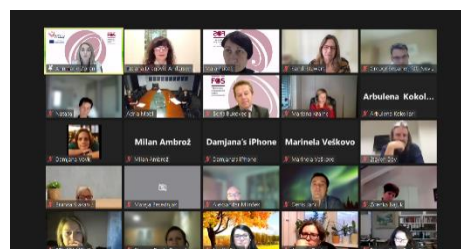


## PANEL OF EXPERTS: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP

### SUMMARY

At the beginning of the expert panel, Dean Prof. Dr. Boris Bukovec officially opened the virtual event "Looking into the Future of Leadership" and at the same time officially inaugurated the International Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Leadership Development and Excellence (ITRC LEAD). The establishment of the Centre coincides with the vision of FOŠ, which states that the Faculty of Organisational Studies (hereinafter: FOŠ) will become one of the most recognised faculties in the field of organisational sciences in the international space and that our graduates will be among the most recognised experts in their field. The founding team of the Centre, led by Dr. Tatjana Dragovič Andersen, Assistant Professor, formulated the vision of the Centre, which is that ITRC LEAD will become the leading research centre for leadership excellence in Slovenia in 5 years and in Europe in 10 years, as well as the mission, which is to create an open space for research, discovery, understanding and development of leadership excellence concepts with the aim of developing the leaders of the future. As part of the stated vision and mission, an online panel of experts "Looking into the future of leadership" has been formed.



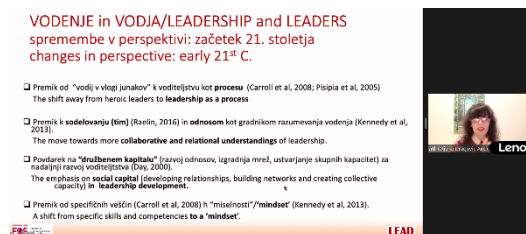
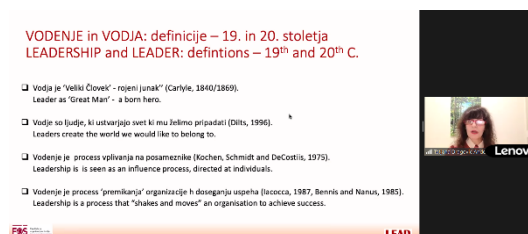
The introductory welcome was also prepared by the Vice Dean Prof. Dr. Annmarie Zoran Gorenc, who addressed the participants in English and Slovenian. She emphasized that one of the projects we are carrying out at FOŠ is the creation of the profile of a well-being manager in an organization in the European Union. During this time, a pilot training program is currently being conducted, and the Vice Dean emphasized that among the participants of the consultation there are also participants in this training, i.e., future well-being managers. She added that research has shown that managers play a key role in employee wellbeing and in turn employees play a key role not only in productivity and performance but also in creativity, innovation, and overall growth. She emphasized that we believe that through the research centre ITRC LEAD and such events, we will develop interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research in leadership and support, promote and share the results of research studies to enrich knowledge in leadership excellence and practice.

The following panellists participated in the panel discussion:

- Dr. Tatjana Mlakar, Assistant Professor, Director General of the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia and lecturer at FOŠ,
- Mojca Novak, Managing Director of the Human Resources Department and Organisation at Adria mobil d.o.o., Chairwoman of the Human Resources Management Section at the Chamber of Commerce of Dolenjska and Bela Krajina,
- Sandra Stewart, teaches leadership development at the Robert H. Smith Business School and is an MCC (Master Certified Coach), accredited by the International Coaching Federation, USA,
- Gregor Sepaher, Director of the Development and Education Centre Novo mesto and member of the Expert Council for Adult Education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports,

- Sonja Gole, General Director of Adria Mobil, d. o. o. and Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce of Dolenjska and Bela Krajina.
- Steven Day, co-founder of Pure Planet (Renewable Energy Company), UK and PhD student in sustainable education at the University of Cambridge in the UK.

Dr. Tatjana Dragovič Andersen began by presenting the evolution of leadership. In the 19th and 20th centuries, various authors noted that a "great man" is born, a hero is born. In the following years, it was stated, that the leaders are those who create the kind of world we want to belong to, and further, that leadership is a process of influencing individuals, sometimes without the use of any authority. At that time, it was also noted that leadership is the process of moving an organization. However, things then began to change in the 21st century. The first changes in perspective were the shift from leaders to the leadership process, the shift to collaboration and the shift to relationships, social capital became important, the development of relationships, the creation of some shared capabilities. Skill development is not as important to a leader as a properly attuned mindset. In the 21st century, ideas about humble leadership have also emerged, as well as various other forms, such as well-being managers.



The consultation began with the first part in the context of considering what the panellists have changed as leaders during COVID -19 (if they are anything at all) and what they have learned from it.

Sonja Gole emphasized that leadership is a process that needs to be managed under different conditions, and COVID is just one of the challenges that leaders who have been in their position for a long time have to face. In leadership, it is important in what time period we operate and how we react in that different time period. When things are going great, you must worry about innovation, excellence, collaboration from everyone, in times of plenty we basically have less engagement because everything is going well. It's very different when problems arise. The question is not whether we will survive the problems or not, the question is when. The world is changing at the speed of light, but it is changing in a cyclical period, so we need to start preparing for the crisis already in this "good" period, because the crisis will undoubtedly come. She has personally lived through three crises already (besides the current one in 2008, 1996 and 1990), so no one is surprised, but COVID was a special challenge, because no crisis is like a previous crisis period. In a time of crisis, a leader should make rational decisions, not in panic, but together with the team, in order to see where we are, what we

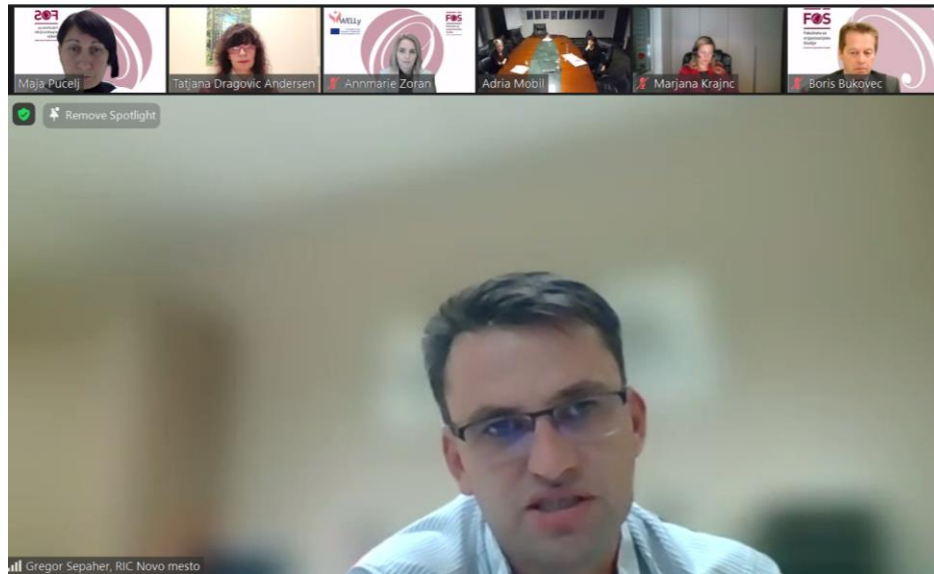
know and what we can do in a short period of time. Once the most urgent things are taken care of, a leader must also think about longer-term solutions, because the crisis not only comes and goes, but also leaves long-term consequences. She pointed out that at Adria Mobil d.o.o., they are proud of their own immediate response at the time of the declared epidemic. She also added that it is often good for a company to shake up its business and consider whether it can do things better, easier, ... She also added that it's good for employees to know that leaders care about them. The key to any change is that we have trust, communicate, and are consistent and that we still have some level of supervision, i.e., some form of monitoring of what is happening.

Mojca Novak emphasized that we learn something from every crisis, but crises also bring painful, not only good experiences that are unknown and new. So far, we have never talked about an unpredictable health crisis that affected companies indirectly as part of the community and individuals directly. However, in her opinion, crisis management has not changed from previous experiences and quick flexibility is still important. She stressed the importance of hugs, handshakes, and direct eye contact. However, whenever this is not possible, it is appropriate to use digital tools to keep the process running smoothly. In doing so, she emphasized that COVID has helped her reframe her existing beliefs that it



is possible to run organisation without hugs, handshakes, and eye contact. She also emphasized the need for flexibility and adaptability.

Gregor Sepaher emphasized that he was initially convinced that the epidemic would be short-lived, but he soon realized that this would not be the case. He stressed that they switched to distance learning even before the Ministry's official instructions and thus took a proactive approach to achieving the set of educational and other goals. He noted that when people need to adapt (including digitally), it can happen very quickly, regardless of the age of the person who needs to adapt. In leadership, he believes it is critical that we expect the unexpected. He pointed out the challenges leaders face at this time, which are: how to get their employees to be always connected and not turn hatred of an external enemy into hatred of each other. He pointed out that he is noticing a greater emphasis on professionalizing staff at all levels (not just in ICT, but especially in soft content). He believes that COVID brings advances in the field of leadership and interpersonal relationships within the team itself. These advances are also reflected in the approach to working at home, the effectiveness of which was questioned by many before this time. The approach to rewarding employees and transparency also needed to change.



Steven Day was one of the founders of Pure Planet (Clean Planet), an organization dedicated to extracting energy from other sources that employed about 200 people. However, after the crisis caused COVID by the extraordinary increase in the prices of electricity and other energy sources and the restrictions on the prices at which they can sell energy to end users, he faced extraordinary problems in the company. However, he pointed out that COVID and the situation in the company contributed to the fact that the employees in the company were incredibly connected, even though they worked from home. He presented data from the UK, namely that 91% of companies offer flexible working, 8 out of 10 companies said that it did not cause or harm them and 60% of employees now regularly work from home or remotely. COVID has enabled greater flexibility of working and 100% of employees can work where they want. He also presented the Randal survey, which was also sent out to attendees, which shows in detail employees' experiences of working during the COVID -19 epidemic. In 2020, he said, it was critical for leaders to communicate the core message of their strategy to employees and become more inclusive. In 2021, he says it is critical for leaders to take care of the mental state of their employees or teams and make sure everyone understands the company's values. He believes that COVID has led to a redefinition of humanity. In their company, they have set up many different channels for employees to communicate and spend time with each other as they are physically separated - so they have a Slack channel for kids, a Slack channel for parents, a book club, a wine club, a tea-testing club, a Slack channel for those who want to get married... And they very much encourage people to get involved in those channels. They still have meetings, but they have limited the one-hour sessions to 50 minutes, so people have 10 minutes to do what they need to do. They have an hour and a half off during working hours so people can go out in the sun or at least get some fresh air, exercise, or otherwise do something for their mental health. There is also a policy of unlimited leave, which employees do not take advantage of, as they are encouraged to take leave whenever they need it.



Sandra Stewart pointed out that as a coach she has found leaders "build the muscles of change" and emphasized that changing themselves helps them the most. She thinks that a leader must ask itself what has changed in him or her (as personalities, as leaders) because she thinks the crisis requires leaders to make certain changes. She points out that a person cannot be the same leader as he or she was yesterday because they do not get the same reaction from the environment. She believes that this is how we get better leaders through three different dimensions:

- Growth mindset, where leaders consolidate themselves in an open growth mindset and know how to adopt a new behaviour in each change situation (by being curious and leaning on others, because only together can we manage these changes),
- incorporating ethics and values into their decisions,
- emotional intelligence.

She also emphasized that she saw a change in organizational structure as HR leaders took on greater leadership roles than previously COVID, as difficult interpersonal connection challenges arose during this time, as well as technical leaders implementing communication processes for telework. She emphasized that in the processes where it is not possible to organize work from home, the leader decides who is the one who must be on site and face some dangers in this COVID crisis. And in her experience, the leaders were able to choose the right people under the given circumstances and they really excelled at it. Emotional intelligence has now taken a different form as it has highlighted the need to take care of the mental health of the employees (people).





Dr. Tatjana Mlakar pointed out that the systemic problems in the field of health care have now become obvious, as we have been too lax in introducing certain changes. She stressed that the health system can do a lot, which is now reflected in this 4th wave of emergency due to COVID -19. She stressed that she is concerned about the lack of solidarity and concerned for the condition of relatives at home or at work. She compared the situation with the 2008 crisis, pointing out that it is no longer possible to make forecasts for the future, as conditions change every day. Therefore, she estimates that the economic crisis is still being managed and the health crisis is not (yet). As a positive consequence, she sees COVID as a given better possibility of mutual agreements, understanding even at a distance, much more effective than before, when physical work meetings were practiced. She stressed the need to focus on the employees and their motivation and training and noted a greater solidarity and bonding between the employees in the team.



The panel was followed by the second part of the consultation on what practitioners can offer and what they expect from future leaders.

Mojca Novak believes that all the qualities, values and roles of leaders have become even more intensely focused. She does not even see the need of a new knowledge or competencies, but she believes that a leader must have all the qualities that are important for leadership, i.e., he or she must have knowledge and developed empathy, must be skilful in communication, must know how to connect people, he or she must be patient, confident, must lead by example through actual behaviour, and at the same time have qualities such as dominance, courage, and equal treatment of team members. He believes that relationships are currently undergoing evolutionary changes and thus the status role of managers is also changing. Wellness managers are very important in society in deepening behaviours, creating environmental conditions and relationships to keep people healthy (both physically and emotionally). In the future, he believes it will be necessary to recognize the competencies of managers and develop them so that they are able to follow their mission as individuals and as leaders.

Sonja Gole emphasized that a leader is a person who leads people. A leader is not someone who knows everything, but someone who knows how to unite all people towards a common goal. However, it is true that he or she must have knowledge, mainly theoretical but also practical. In her view, a leader is not born, but is formed when he or she crosses the path necessary for it. The leader must be able to bring together different people with different characters, with different values and different situations at different times. Change is a constant because we do not know what will happen tomorrow. We know what happened yesterday, but we do not need leaders for yesterday, we need leaders for tomorrow, even though we do not know what will happen tomorrow. The leader must have compassion or alertness and psychological knowledge.

Gregor Sepaher estimates that a leader must be able to adapt to different conditions, but COVID's time was an opportunity for a leader to grow. The leader must also provide a certain level of security (including psychological), which has now proven to be important in this time, but we did not think about it so much before. We have also realized that leadership can also be softer, less hierarchical but still effective, and that leadership needs to be people-centred first and foremost. So the key characteristics of leaders of the future are: Flexibility, pliability, they must be able to accept and start from the facts, leadership that is focused on tomorrow and not on yesterday, alertness (to help workers work effectively and creatively under pressure when needed), so that the leader is also a coach and mentor, that he or she is willing to train, that he or she is able to select and build a winning team where employees are satisfied, which is crucial, because only in this way we can exploit the potential of employees. That's critical, because that's the only way we can harness the potential of our people. Perhaps no different than we do now, just emphasizing that we need to recognize this even better than we do now.

Steven Day believes that we should adopt a word: Compassion. If we think about the previous competency requirements for managers, in addition to the mechanical ability to do the job they are in, the ability to communicate well, have fantastic employees, be creative and excellent, and be able to think critically. These grades are 4 C, and 5 C is compassion, which he believes will be the most important virtue of the leader of the future. They need to understand people, they need to be empathetic, so he believes that empathy will be the predominant ability of the leader of the future after an epidemic.

Sandra Stewart emphasized that in addition to all the above qualities, the leaders of the future will also need to be anthropologists, as they will need to create a shared culture, an identity, a how and

why of living together. And this includes building all competencies as a community, so working on having an open, innovative mindset and striving to be better.

In conclusion, in all considerations of what is expected of a leader, it was pointed out that leaders are also only human, and it is necessary to also pay attention to their well-being, otherwise they can burn out. It was also considered that leaders in the public sector, while empathetic, can be quickly “abused” by their subordinates. There is also the question of how to be a superhuman in an age where there is less and less respect from any authority. It is also important for a leader to remember a time when they were not a leader, when they had a particular leader over them and how they felt at that moment.

At the end dr. Tatjana Dragović Andersen offered two words as ideas for her upcoming article:

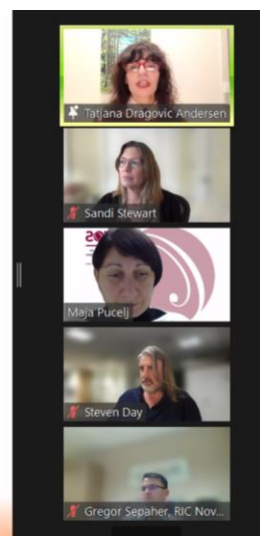
- folleadowship, as a more emphasized word to monitor, to see that as a leader it is sometimes necessary to monitor the people around you (team), the environment, crises, and changes.
- folleadowership, where the emphasis is on leading and monitoring in the background, and we do both at the same time.

She challenged participants to think about how to name these two words in Slovenian, as a new concept that combines leadership and monitoring of self and others. And that, she concluded, is exactly what will happen in the new International Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Leadership Development and Excellence (ITRC LEAD). She invited all participants of the panel to participate in a full day summit in May 2022, where the topic that will be highlighted, is going to be that topic that will be the most important at that time. She invited all the participants to participate at the event and prepare posters or a presentation. The summit will be used to discuss and develop the concepts of future leadership excellence.



**FOLleadOWship**

**folLEADowership**



The panel was closed by Dean Prof. Dr. Boris Bukovec.