



# M A N I F E S T O

**Climate change is real.** And we all know we need to do things differently. Change the way we do things. Change the way we see things. Not just some of us. **All of us.** Together. Work together as governments, companies, organisations, universities and industries. Work together as people. Crossing boundaries and borders. Working towards a common goal, a healthy planet. Our healthy planet. Technology will help us, **but people are the way.** Because of who they are. And because of what they do with technology. Let's stop talking about users, consumers, clients and customers. Let's focus on people and **co-create solutions** with them. Together. Let's steer away from our expert mindset and take on a people-centred mindset. A planet-centred mindset. Let's not be afraid. Of change, of others, the unknown. Let's embrace complexity, other views and surprising solutions might arise. **Let's be brave and make a change. Together.**



# PEOPLE

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PEOPLE brings together interdisciplinary groups of students, faculty educators and industry professionals to solve real-life business challenges in the field of sustainable living and energy. PEOPLE helps industry professionals to integrate social science expertise in their practice, allows social science students to develop additional practical competences towards employability and enables faculty educators to develop better-engaged social science learning in Higher Education.

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# **CONTENTS**

**PEOPLE PROJECT: EVALUATION**

**1**

**SUSTAINABLE CAFÉS**

**2**

**PEOPLE PROJECT AS BEST PRACTICE  
EXAMPLE FOR FUTURE EUROPEAN CURRICULA**

**3**

**PEOPLE PROJECT'S  
2nd CO-CREATION CAMP**

**6**

**BUILDING PEOPLE COMMUNITY IN OSLO**

**8**

**THE HUMAN SHOW**

**9**

**CALL FOR ACTION**

**10**

# PEOPLE PROJECT: EVALUATION

**Three years have gone by since nine partner organizations embarked upon a journey to bring together Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from the Social Sciences & Humanities and industries from the Sustainable Living and Energy sector. Our aim was to jointly develop and integrate people-centred development approaches into our research, teaching and learning practices. Because we believed that understanding people should be an indispensable part of industrial development processes.**

With PEOPLE we aimed to address 3 urgent challenges for the European Union; the underemployment of European graduates from Social Sciences & Humanities; a lack of social science expertise in the sustainable living and energy sector and the need for better-engaged social science learning in Higher Education. To be able to assess if we have reached our aims and gather learnings to allow other HEIs and industry collaborations to bring a people's perspective to their own challenges, a dedicated team has prepared and executed an evaluation of the people-centred development approach and methodology.

**Their aim was to evaluate to what extent:**

- 1) students gained valuable practical skills to complement their theoretical education;**
- 2) industry professionals understood and acknowledged the added value of social sciences and**
- 3) faculty educators developed industry-relevant education.**

To be able to assess PEOPLE's success in these regards the PEOPLE partners determined a representative indicator of success per stakeholder and one pertaining the collaboration.

## **Students**

The PEOPLE Learning Cycles were designed to provide students with opportunities to learn first-hand about the various needs and challenges of industry partners and to help them discover how they could add value in this context.

The indicator of success for participating students was therefore formulated as whether students are able to articulate their added value as social scientists for industry.

## **Industry professionals**

The Learning Cycles were designed to provide participating industry professionals with opportunities to gain new perspectives through interaction with PEOPLE students and their students' insights in addressing business challenges. The indicator of success in this regard was thus whether industry professionals are able to express their recognition and acknowledgement of the added value of social sciences within their industry.

## **Teachers**

Teachers and researchers within higher education sometimes focus more on the creation and transfer of knowledge than on the application of that knowledge. PEOPLE aimed to show the benefits of applied problem-driven and people-centred social research. PEOPLE Learning Cycles exposed faculty educators and researchers to the needs and challenges of industry, enabling them to implement people-centred development into the delivery of their curricula. The indicator of success in this regard was therefore whether faculty educators are able to recognize and acknowledge the added value of involving business and industry in their education programs.

## **Collaboration**

Sharing of knowledge and experiences between partners in each national team was identified as a central mechanism for realising PEOPLE aims through the implementation of the national People-centred Learning Cycles. These aimed to facilitate structured, result-driven collaboration between HEI's and industry, addressing specific challenges with clear benefits from participation of stakeholders. Therefore, the indicator for success in this regard was for all stakeholders within a national PEOPLE partnership to articulate the benefits and challenges they experienced through collaboration for knowledge transfer and problem-solving.

An extensive elaboration on the results of the evaluation can be found in the Final Evaluation Report. In brief, our PEOPLE evaluation shows that students acquired industry-specific skills and built confidence as researchers and future employees. They developed their ability to articulate (within and outside their industry) their added value as a social scientists in sustainable living and energy. As one student said it:

**"It was really an honour to use these great methods. I was happy I had an occasion to improve my skills because I wasn't such a good anthropologist at the time."**

Industry professionals experienced professional development that enabled them to recognize and acknowledge the added value of social sciences within their industry and build bridges between them. In addition, organizational change in the partner organizations resulted in increased awareness, follow-up projects and new jobs. One industry professional told the evaluation team:

**“I first did not know what anthropology was, I thought it was something similar to archaeology. I did not have a clue in the beginning.”**

And finally, faculty educators actively involved business in the design of their education programmes during PEOPLE Learning Cycles and developed innovative teaching methods such as case-study approaches, and teaching outside of the classroom. Faculty educators also reported gaining insights into the benefits of interdisciplinary work in industry. As one teacher said:

**“Group dynamics of students is completely different in the PEOPLE project, where we usually meet in the 'field', than it is in the classroom where I usually teach. The exchange of information was good and also completely different as in the ex-cathedra lectures at the university department, when it is more difficult to establish the feeling of closeness and cooperation.”**

PEOPLE's learnings with regards to HEIs and industry collaborations shows that project design, timing and the logistics of empirical research all present possible hurdles for the implementation of people-centred learning cycles. Additionally, enablers such as a high degree of co-creation, acknowledgement of pedagogic values, use of intermediaries, regular face-to-face communication and trust proved to be highly beneficial for HEI-industry relationships. As was written in a national evaluation report:

**Regular face-to-face contact between HEI and industry is fundamental not only for the smooth running of activities, but also for unexpected hurdles and implicit assumptions to emerge from both sides, so that joint solutions can be identified. Moreover, it helps in reflecting on the learning process for all parties.**

# Sustainable Cafés

**As the PEOPLE project's funded period has ended, we reflect back on the teams we created, the collaborations that were forged, the research that's been conducted, the insights we gained, the skills that were developed and the community that has grown around the initial project partners.**

During the two PEOPLE Learning Cycles, in each of the four PEOPLE countries, participating students, teachers and industry professionals grew into tightly knit interdisciplinary teams. As these teams developed, they all experienced the desire to share their learnings with a wider audience and learn from the exchange with members of the larger PEOPLE community.

One of the ways in which we were able to cater to this need, was through the organization of Sustainable Cafés. A Sustainable Café can be seen as an informal event where different stakeholders come together to present and discuss 'PEOPLE topics' such as university-business collaboration, people-centred development approaches and intricacies of sustainable living and energy.

Over the course of the PEOPLE project, we organized sixteen such events, four in each of the participating countries. Every national PEOPLE team was able to program their own cafés in accordance with the needs and connective opportunities within their specific context. This not only allowed them to interact with relevant external stakeholders in their context, but also build the larger PEOPLE community from within their country.

To that effect, many of the Sustainable Cafés were realized in collaboration with organizations that were initially not part of the PEOPLE community but grew into PEOPLE partners that helped build the community. In Slovenia for example, Sustainable Cafés were organized together with the Slovenian Ethnological and Anthropological Association and the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In the Dutch context, VUA and Alliander forged partnerships with the convenors of EthnoBorrel and Interbuilding Applied Anthropology Meetup – Amsterdam.

These collaborations with 'outside' (network) organizations enable the exchange of views, perspectives and experiences with all kinds of practitioners in the field of Sustainable Living and Energy and professionals from disciplines outside the social sciences such as web developers, designers and marketers working with people-centered approaches. This joining of forces on a program-level allowed our teams to reach out to indirect audiences and in doing so it enabled them to build on the community even further.

All in all, over 700 people from all over the professional and academic spectrum participated in our Sustainable Cafés. Enabling our PEOPLE teams to raise awareness on the added value of people-centered approaches, the added value of social scientists for industry, and the need for a people perspective in the field of Sustainable Living and Energy. Additionally, our teams received valuable comments, feedback and responses adding to their research efforts and gained collaborators in the community of practice we now call PEOPLE.





# PEOPLE project as best practice example for future European curricula

We are pleased that the European initiative on "Curriculum Guidelines for Key Enabling Technologies and Advanced Manufacturing Technologies" has identified the PEOPLE project as a best practice example. Our key contribution to improve the quality and relevance of existing learning and teaching practices in manufacturing education relates to incorporating non-technical disciplines into the curriculum in order to develop cross-cutting competences and a mind-set beyond technical expertise. The initiative has been launched by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) under the powers delegated by the European Commission, Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME (DG GROW).

Gregor Cerinsek, the coordinator and project manager of PEOPLE contributed to two different expert panel workshops, one focusing on "aligning advanced manufacturing education and training with the 21st century needs" and the second one focusing on "future-proofing vocational education for manufacturing: strategy, collaboration patterns and learning environment". On 26 November 2019 we will be part of the final high-level conference in Brussels on "Skills for Industry: Curriculum Guidelines 4.0". In the following two paragraphs you can get a glimpse into our contribution on people-centred development as a novel interdisciplinary and co-creative approach towards teaching and learning.

In the contemporary world, which faces the challenges of exponential growth of technology, two paradigms are shaping the way we see and perceive the development of our society. In the utopian paradigm, the technology and technological innovation is seen as something that will improve the society and solve all burning problems, from global warming to demographic challenges. On the contrary, the dystopian model suggests that technology will lead to the destruction of our civilization.

Generally speaking, we can observe the presence of both paradigms also in the education system; relying on people as passive consumers of the technology on one hand side (more present in engineering education), and criticizing all development initiatives without offering suitable alternatives on the other (more present in social sciences and humanities).

The PEOPLE model of interdisciplinary university-business co-creation challenges both paradigms and perceives technology as something still unfinished, incomplete and always reshaped by the people (users) who improvise and manipulate with it.

Crucial innovation in technology development lies in the ability to understand "what people will do with technology" and not "what technology will do to people". And this furthermore requires a shift in teaching and learning practices. The key intended learning outcome should not be the skills to design and develop technologies that will impose a desired behavioural change, neither the skills to create the need for these solutions.

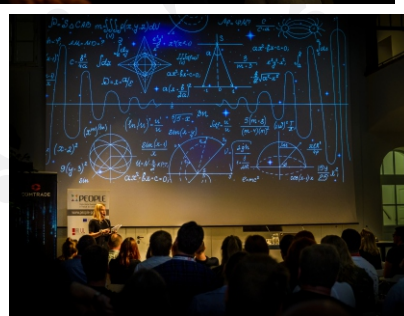


The taught skillset and competences should focus on involving people in the very beginning of the product, service, or system development process – opening-up the innovation opportunities through co-creation with the people and trying to understand how the existing behaviours could be the foundation for the societal and environmental change we aim to achieve.

The PEOPLE education model is based on the following principles:

- 1) interdisciplinary and essentially collaborative: bringing together different disciplines and expertise, where engineering works hand in hand with social sciences and humanities. Key guiding principle is "dare to see things from other perspectives than your own";
- 2) multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder: involving industry professionals, university teachers and representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations;
- 3) people as co-creators: involved in all stages of product and service development process. Key guiding principle is "create with the people and not for them";
- 4) rooted in ethnography: as a methodology to collect, analyse and understand the data and to generate in-depth insights about peoples' behaviours, practices, and needs;
- 5) in dialogue with theory and bringing up ethical considerations: understanding bigger contexts of emerging futures and world's challenges.







# Co-creating across disciplines and sectors PEOPLE project's 2nd Co-Creation Camp

On 3 and 4 July 2019, social sciences and humanities students, their academic and industry mentors, and PEOPLE team members from Slovenia, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Czechia got together to share their experiences and learnings at the PEOPLE project's 2nd (and final!) Co-Creation Camp in Ljubljana. Co-Creation Camps are the finale of the Learning Cycles, where the four national teams meet and spend two intensive days co-creating new knowledge and insights.



PEOPLE project manager Gregor Cerinšek (IRI UL) welcomes participants at the 2nd Co-Creation Camp, Ljubljana (Photo: Tilen Šoštarič)

As the 2nd Learning Cycle came to an end, the four teams had been working tirelessly on their case studies. While the case studies were very diverse, the overarching goal of the Learning Cycle was to apply social sciences and humanities methods and people-centred development approaches to real-life challenges in the energy and sustainability fields. This year's Co-Creation Camp was hosted and co-organised by the Slovenian PEOPLE project partners: Institute for Innovation and Development of University of Ljubljana (IRI UL), Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), and Slovenian industry partner Metronik. The two-day programme included presentations, workshops, and co-creation activities aimed at enhancing our learning process in the PEOPLE higher education – industry – students triangle.

This year's special guest at the event was Prof Dr Sarah Pink, a world leading design anthropologist and a member of the PEOPLE project's advisory board. In addition, Joanne Mihelcic, Research Fellow at Monash University in Australia and a sociotechnical analyst who applies interdisciplinary expertise to understanding how people experience the technical, social and material world, took part in the Co-Creation Camp as an external discussant and observer.

## Co-Creation Camp: Day 1

The first day of the Co-Creation Camp started with an inspirational talk by Prof Sarah Pink. Sarah is currently the Director of the Emerging Technologies Lab at Monash University in Melbourne, and has authored a number of key readings in design anthropology, applied anthropology, and futures anthropology, among other topics. Her career is a unique trajectory (in-)between academia, research, design, and industry.

In her talk, Sarah explained how the diverse projects that she has undertaken from her PhD onwards (from sustainability and washing machines in Indonesia, to homes and energy, wearables, wellbeing, or the future of mobility), and the partnerships developed with organisations outside of academia, are intertwined and provide a complex understanding of human lives, their relationships with their environments, animals, technologies, and possible futures. Sarah's talk deepened our understanding of how anthropology and social sciences can engage with non-traditional research topics, methodologies, and in inter- or transdisciplinary research teams, utilise and transform social science skills and methodologies to co-create exciting results.



Dr Sarah Pink and Dr Dan Podjed at the »Forget about users - start thinking about people!« event at ZRC SAZU, 4 July 2019 (Photo: Tilen Šoštarič)

In continuation, each national team of PEOPLE students presented their case study and their findings and had the chance to discuss their learnings in individual Q&A sessions. In the afternoon, the participants were divided into four working groups (academia, industry, and two student groups) to discuss the Learning Cycle process. The day ended with a closing panel discussion, in which the four teams shared key insights from the workshop.





In four groups, students, industry and academic mentors shared and discussed their PEOPLE Learning Cycle experience (Photo: Tilen Šoštarčič)

**The two-day programme included presentations, workshops, and co-creation activities aimed at enhancing our learning process in the PEOPLE higher education – industry – students triangle.**

### Co-Creation Camp: Day 2

The second morning was dedicated to the Pyramid principle workshop, delivered by PEOPLE team members Peter Pos (Alliander) and Marrije Prins (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam). The Co-Creation Camp participants were introduced to the tool that is used to process and structure information to convey a story, message or presentation in a clear and compelling way. In smaller teams, the participants then designed their own 3-minute presentations, following the Pyramid principles. The morning session concluded with team presentations and discussion.

As the second day was also aimed at a broader audience, all participants then took part in a symposium, organised at ZRC SAZU. Over 40 representatives of Slovenian industry and academia, researchers, general public, and the media attended the »Forget about users - start thinking about people!« event.



Dr Sarah Pink (Monash University), Marko Javornik (Voyego, a Comtrade company), Peter Pos (Alliander) and Dr Dan Podjed (ZRC SAZU) discussed social sciences and industry are co-creating technologies and services for the future (Photo: Tilen Šoštarčič)

Keynote talks on how social sciences and the industry are co-creating technologies and services for the future were delivered by Prof Dr Sarah Pink (Monash University), Marko Javornik (Voyego, a Comtrade company), Peter Pos (Alliander) and Dr Dan Podjed (ZRC SAZU), who also moderated the event, while the PEOPLE students presented their case studies and experience in the PEOPLE project.

**»Anthropology and social sciences can engage with non-traditional research topics, methodologies, and in inter- or transdisciplinary research teams, utilise and transform social science skills and methodologies to co-create exciting results.«**



PEOPLE Co-Creation Camp's first day included an inspirational talk, student presentations and workshops (Photo: Tilen Šoštarčič)

A panel discussion of the key themes that emerged at the symposium wrapped up the event, followed by informal networking and discussions. The two Co-Creation Camps, organised in Amsterdam and Ljubljana, provided a valuable additional dimension to the project's agenda of bridging between disciplines, between university and industry, and bringing a problem-based and co-creative learning process into higher education curricula.

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# Sustaining Cities

## Building PEOPLE Community in Oslo

As the cherry on top and the grand finale of the project's funding period, the PEOPLE team took part in the 7th Why the World Needs Anthropologists symposium in Oslo, Norway. Over the three days, we connected with and learned from researchers, practitioners, students, business and industry representatives, all invested in Sustaining Cities, the topic of this year's event. In the symposiums' workshop session, the PEOPLE team transferred their learnings on university-industry cooperation, designing and managing collaborative research and development projects in a hands-on workshop. The workshop might be noted in historical annals as the final public event of the Knowledge Alliances' PEOPLE project. But simultaneously, as an important step in building the PEOPLE community and transforming PEOPLE into a movement, it also marks a new beginning.



The PEOPLE project has had a long-lasting and productive partnership with the Applied Anthropology Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA AAN). EASA AAN is dedicated to circular transfer of knowledge between academia, private and public sectors, NGOs, interest groups, students and other interested individuals. The network hosts Why the World Needs Anthropologists: “the annual showdown, bursting out of the intersections of human-centred, critically oriented academia and innovative creative industries” (as vividly described on the event's website, <https://www.applied-anthropology.com/>). As such, it resonates closely with the agenda of the PEOPLE project, so the mutual support and cooperation seemed an obvious move. PEOPLE has contributed to all three WWNA events, organised during the project's lifetime: we were Powering the Planet in Durham, UK (2017), Designing the Future in Lisbon (2018), and finally, Sustaining Cities in Oslo (2019). PEOPLE team member, Dr Dan Podjed is also the founder of EASA AAN and WWNA symposium and continues to serve as its Executive Advisory Board member, which we are immensely proud of.

Between 25 and 27 October 2019, approximately 300 attendees explored the underbelly of green and smart cities, questioning and challenging these ideals, looking into infrastructures of urban spaces and narrating the contradictions and compromises of life in cities. The event brought together researchers, anthropologists, ethnographers, designers, architects, urban planners, and more, with a view to inspire and incite action, foster fruitful collaborations and exchange ideas and practices (WWNA). The PEOPLE project's workshop was convened by Marrije Prins (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) and Dr Sara Arko (Metronik), with the support of PEOPLE team members Maud Merrinboer, Assist Prof Dr Giulia Sinatti and Assoc Prof Dr Ellen W. Bal (all three Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam).

The aim of the workshop was to demonstrate how people-centred development approaches can be applied in industrial, practical and real-life settings and how anthropology can bring value to product or service design and development process. In particular, we focused on sustaining and managing interdisciplinary and cross-sector R&D teams, which was one of the key takeaways of the project's collaborative nature. Researchers may be very well acquainted with planning and conducting long term research projects, often in the style of the lone anthropologist, spending a year or so in the field then taking another year to analyse and “write up” the research results. In a collaborative R&D project, however, research forms only one part of the collaboration process and is often conducted in interdisciplinary teams. Additionally, there is a number of stakeholders involved, which may include local government organisations, funders, industry partners, civil society organisations, and – last but not least – the intended recipients of the solution being developed within such a project (e.g. residents in a particular urban area, citizens using the public transportation system).





Following the initial presentation of the PEOPLE project, the 20 participants (students, academics, and practitioners) were divided into four mixed-background groups, each assisted by one of the PEOPLE team members. The teams collaboratively identified specific urban challenges and were in continuation guided through the process of initiating, organising, planning, delivering and evaluating their specific case study. The task was challenging as the participants had to simultaneously focus on the collaborative aspects of developing a R&D plan, as well as find innovative ways to tackle the topic and context of their concrete urban challenge.



The result of each group was an applied anthropology project proposal with a research & development plan that could be offered to external organizations (industry, local government etc.). In conclusion, the four groups presented their plans to other workshop participants in the form of a short pitch.



PEOPLE project's three-hour workshop at WWNA 2019 sparked a number of creative and innovative ideas, and initiated a dialogue on university-industry (or government) cooperation in research and development. We would like to thank all the participants for their active engagement and sharing the insights from the workshop on the conference's concluding plenary session.

*Photos: Giulia Sinatti*

# THE HUMAN SHOW

»This summer I was invited to participate in a podcast about the PEOPLE project. I had never recorded a podcast before and I like first timers, so I was excited! The podcast recording enabled me to share my experiences in the PEOPLE project and reflect on it. I had been participating in the project for half a year by then and felt the need to share what I had learned and done. If you're interested, go and listen!« ~ Nora Steenhuis

The Human Show is a podcast series that provides insights in "(...) the nature of people's relationship to communicative and interactive technology (...) and the role ethics, power, agency and trust play in the making and performance of that relationship". The Human Show shares perspectives of social scientists and practitioners from all over the world and in July 2019, four PEOPLE participants (Gregor Cerinšek, Maria Salaru, Sara Arko and Nora Steenhuis) were able to elaborate on their PEOPLE experiences in dialogue with host Corina Enache.

Interested to hear what they talked about? You can listen to The Human Show here:

<https://worldpodcasts.com/the-human-show/>

# CALL FOR ACTION

## Join our PEOPLE Community

[info@people-project.net](mailto:info@people-project.net)

### From PEOPLE-centred to PLANET-centred development

The world needs new, people- and planet-centred approaches to enable safe, ethical and effective design, integration, management and regulation of new products, services and solutions. Our society calls for education and training that will profoundly disrupt the educational status quo. PEOPLE Community is working on a new intensive, research-driven, collaborative and participatory experiment that aims to reshape the applied sciences through the educational lens.

Similarly to PEOPLE, the interdisciplinary teams of students, university professors, industry and NGO representatives will be jointly working on common environmental and societal challenges and co-creating solutions through involvement of people. However, a shift is made from the people-centred development towards planet-centred development, taking into account broader environmental and societal contexts, ethical considerations and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Key aim of the “Active8-Planet” initiative is the creation of new applied sciences on the crossings of existing fields and disciplines. We aim to establish new branches of social sciences and engineering – moving from a world of solving problems to a world of being able to frame critical questions.





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# PEOPLE

People-Centred Development Approaches  
in Practical and Learning Environments

## PEOPLE PROJECT PARTNERS:

### Slovenia



Institute for Innovation and Development of University of Ljubljana  
(IRI UL; project coordinator) <http://iri.uni-lj.si/en/home/>



Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
(ZRC SAZU) <https://www.zrc-sazu.si/en/node>



Metronik <http://www.metronik.net>

### United Kingdom



Durham University <https://www.dur.ac.uk>



Durham County Council <http://www.durham.gov.uk>

### The Netherlands



Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) <https://www.vu.nl/en/>



Alliander <https://www.alliander.com/en>

### Czech Republic



Charles University  
Environment Centre

Charles University in Prague (CUNI) <http://www.cuni.cz/UKEN-1.html>



VUPS [www.vups.cz/en/](http://www.vups.cz/en/)

# PEOPLE-CENTRED DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Forget about users, consumers and clients. Start thinking about people.
2. Create with people – not only for them.
3. It's not what technology does to people,  
but what people do with technology.
4. Involve and engage social sciences and humanities  
for creating meaningful and sustainable products.
5. Make a move from the expert to people-centred mindset.
6. Embrace the unknown.
7. Stop only interpreting the world. Start changing it for the better.
8. Don't assume. Ask and observe.
9. Support innovation with co-creation.
10. Combine big data with thick data to produce deep insights.
11. Be kind – to people and planet.

PEOPLE community, 2019