



CLEC MAGAZINE

YOUNG WRITERS FOR WORLD ECONOMIC CHALLENGES



N12, OCTOBER 2024

**BENESSERE E
INNOVAZIONE:
AGRICOLTURA SOCIALE**

**MONEY:
MOTIVATION OR
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**PSYCHOLOGY
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**SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS: THE
POWER OF GREEN SUPPLY
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ANNOUNCEMENT

BENESSERE E INNOVAZIONE: AGRICOLTURA SOCIALE

BY ROBERTA LASOCHA E SARA LUCIANO

L'agricoltura sociale utilizza l'ambiente rurale per favorire l'inclusione sociale, la formazione e il benessere di persone fragili. Questo modello innovativo è sostenuto dai Gruppi operativi e finanziato dalla Politica Agricola Comune.

L'innovazione in agricoltura può essere definita come l'introduzione e l'applicazione di nuove idee, processi, prodotti o tecnologie che significativamente migliorano la qualità, la produttività o la sostenibilità dell'agricoltura e della gestione delle risorse naturali. [1]

Molto spesso l'innovazione è legata all'adozione di nuove pratiche connesse al ruolo multifunzionale dell'agricoltura.

Tra queste troviamo l'agricoltura sociale la quale è un insieme di pratiche agricole integrate con servizi sociali e sanitari, mirate a promuovere l'inclusione sociale, l'educazione, la riabilitazione e il benessere di individui appartenenti a categorie vulnerabili.

Questo approccio trasforma l'ambiente agricolo in un contesto terapeutico dove persone con disabilità, anziani, giovani a rischio e persone con problemi di dipendenza possono trovare opportunità di recupero, crescita personale e integrazione sociale.



Quali sono le attività tipiche dell'agricoltura sociale?

- la terapia assistita con animali,
- l'orticoltura terapeutica,
- e programmi di formazione e lavoro assistito.

Queste attività non solo vanno a supportare in modo terapeutico il soggetto, ma facilitano lo sviluppo delle competenze utili nel mercato del lavoro.

Queste innovazioni nell'ambito agricolo da chi vengono promosse?

I progetti di agricoltura sociale si fondano su collaborazioni tra

istituzioni agricole, enti di ricerca, università e servizi sanitari e sociali, creando una rete di supporto che mira a migliorare la qualità della vita dei partecipanti e a rafforzare le comunità locali. Inoltre, l'agricoltura sociale contribuisce a rivedere il concetto di impresa agricola, integrando la sostenibilità sociale con quella economica e ambientale, promuovendo pratiche agricole che sono ecologicamente sostenibili e socialmente responsabili.



Anche l'agricoltura sociale, intesa come modello innovativo di attività primaria, è promossa dal PEI-AGRI.

Il Partenariato Europeo per l'Innovazione in Agricoltura (PEI-AGRI) è un'iniziativa dell'Unione Europea che mira a promuovere l'innovazione e migliorare la competitività e la sostenibilità del settore agricolo europeo, favorendo la collaborazione tra agricoltori, ricercatori e altri attori del territorio.

Attraverso un modello interattivo di innovazione, l'obiettivo è trasformare idee in soluzioni innovative per affrontare sfide e cogliere opportunità nel settore agricolo e forestale.

Come operano per raggiungere gli obiettivi?

Gli obiettivi vengono raggiunti attraverso i Gruppi Operativi, i quali sono uno

“strumento per la diffusione delle innovazioni nel settore agroalimentare e forestale che ha l'obiettivo di individuare – in un determinato contesto – soluzioni a specifici problemi o di promuovere specifiche opportunità per le imprese agricole” [2].

Il GO è costituito da diversi partner, provenienti da diversi settori operativi e scientifici, che hanno in comune un interesse specifico in un progetto di innovazione pratica.[1] Due sono, sostanzialmente, le finalità del GO: risolvere, mediante l'innovazione, alcune problematiche tecniche, economiche e/o organizzative di specifici sistemi agricoli e promuovere una collaborazione continua e interattiva fra i componenti del partenariato [1].

Il tutto come viene finanziato?

La fonte principale di finanziamento è la PAC, Politica Agricola Comunitaria, la quale promuove lo sviluppo economico, agricolo e sociale all'interno dell'Unione Europea.

L'agricoltura sociale viene finanziata dal FEASR Fondo Europeo Agricolo per lo Sviluppo Rurale, il quale promuove progetti per l'inclusione sociale, l'educazione e la formazione nel contesto rurale.

Ogni Stato membro dell'UE elabora un PSR Programma di Sviluppo Rurale che descrive come utilizzerà i fondi del FEASR per raggiungere gli obiettivi di sviluppo rurale.

Il PEI AGRI è integrato in questi

programmi e riceve finanziamenti attraverso varie misure previste nei PSR: il sostegno alla cooperazione tra agricoltori (Misura 16); trasferimento di conoscenze e azioni di informazione (Misura 1); Servizi di consulenza, gestione agricola e servizi di sostituzione (Misura 2).

Dove possiamo trovare i progetti di innovazione agricola?



Il portale Innovarurale, creato dal CREA-PB in collaborazione con ISMEA e promosso dal Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari, Forestali e del Turismo (Mipaaf), nasce per facilitare la diffusione di informazioni su ricerca, conoscenza e innovazione nel settore agroalimentare. [3]

Si ispira a tre principi chiave: diffusione della conoscenza, progetti e risultati, confronto con gli esperti, questi, favoriscono la nascita di nuove iniziative attraverso la collaborazione e la condivisione delle risorse.

Questo portale ha tre banche dati fondamentali per migliorare il coordinamento tra i progetti e gli attori coinvolti:

- La banca dati della ricerca con progetti a livello regionale;
- Il catalogo delle innovazioni dove troviamo i progetti di innovazione agricola;
- La banca dei dati dei GO che raccoglie informazioni progettuali

e dettagliate riguardo le attività delle GO in Italia.

Innovarurale si pone come un hub centrale per la raccolta e distribuzione di informazioni sulle ricerche e innovazioni, promuovendo la nascita di nuove idee progettuali.

Il pensiero montessoriano come innovazione agricoltura sociale

Tra i vari progetti innovativi che si trovano sul portale di Innovarurale, uno di quelli che rispecchia al meglio l'innovazione in agricoltura sociale creando un campo innovativo che integra pratiche agricole con obiettivi sociali, generando un impatto positivo sulle comunità rurali è il progetto "Agricoltura Sociale Marche" (A.S.M.). Il progetto applica il pensiero montessoriano per promuovere inclusione sociale e benessere.



Nel 2019 nasce il gruppo operativo A.S.M. per promuovere la multifunzionalità dell'azienda agricola per una maggiore sostenibilità economica, mediante l'offerta di servizi di welfare sociale innovativi alla persona e vendita di prodotti a Km

zero con elevato valore etico, applicando il pensiero montessoriano a infanzia, età anziana e utenza con diverse capacità psico-fisiche. La multifunzionalità ed il pensiero montessoriano rientrano tra gli obiettivi generali. [5]

Tra gli obiettivi specifici, invece, ritroviamo:

- **Agri infanzia:**

Educazione per bambini da 1 a 6 anni, integrando metodologie Montessori.

- **Longevità Attiva e disabilità:**

"laboratorio di longevità attiva" in ambiente rurale, progettato per **migliorare il benessere fisico e psichico di diverse categorie di persone**, inclusi anziani, adulti e giovani con disabilità, e individui con disturbi dello spettro autistico;

- **Intergenerazionalità e integra-bilità:**

promozione dell'interazione tra diverse generazioni.

Questo progetto ormai concluso nel 2022 ha riportato ottimi benefici e risultati, un miglioramento dello stato di benessere e di autoefficacia, miglioramento dello stile di vita, miglioramento della vita relazione.

Questo modello può fungere da ispirazione per altre iniziative simili, promuovendo una visione sostenibile e inclusiva dell'agricoltura. Si tratta dunque di un modello imprenditoriale che, pur perseguendo obiettivi di natura sociale,

consente all'imprenditore agricolo di ottenere anche risultati economici positivi, attraverso la costruzione di reti agroalimentari alternative e il supporto della politica economica che compensa la produzione di beni pubblici da parte dell'azienda agricola.

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MONEY: MOTIVATION OR ANXIETY WHY COMPARISON KILLS?

BY SOFYA PETRUSSEVICH

We tend to believe that a constant race for higher income and a luxurious lifestyle would make us happier and motivate for future achievements, comparing ourselves to other people would push us forward and bring some drive to the career, but is it really true? And what are the consequences of this attitude towards finances?

Our society is materialistic, no matter how hard many would try to convince us otherwise. Individuals pursue their dreams and ambitions to achieve higher income and wealth because they know that money is a powerful source for getting what they want.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) during the last decades after the Second World War, inflation-adjusted income increased triple and according to the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), prices for real estate more than doubled. In the article "Time" magazine by Gregg Easterbrook "Money: The Real Truth About Money", the author argues that while wealth has increased dramatically in modern society, it has not necessarily led to increased happiness. Despite significant rises in income and the size of homes since World War II, surveys show that people do not report higher levels of happiness.

Money is a goal, money is a dream, and money is a necessity today.



Money as a Motivator:

- Career Ambition:

Financial incentives often drive people to pursue higher education, strive for promotions, and work harder.

- Personal Goals:

Money enables individuals to achieve personal goals such as buying a house, traveling, or securing a comfortable retirement.

- Innovation and Entrepreneurship:
- Access to capital can spark innovation, leading to new businesses and technological advancements.

The pursuit of material wealth often leads to diminishing returns in terms of personal satisfaction and well-being. People often believe that

buying new gadgets or luxury items will bring lasting happiness, but the satisfaction from these purchases is usually temporary.

Individuals tend to compete with each other and compare themselves with people surrounding them in everything, including income and material possessions.

People's perceptions of their wealth are heavily influenced by social comparisons and rising expectations. If everyone around you is getting richer, staying at the same level can feel like a loss, even if your absolute wealth is sufficient. Constantly comparing oneself to wealthier peers can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

Sometimes it is good to use some additional motivation to push yourself to achieve your goals and not give up on your dreams, but in recent years, with a drastic increase in social media influence, many people just get stressed and even depressed because they see the beautiful picture of people's highlights without knowing their downfalls. Influencers demonstrate their luxurious lifestyle with the opportunities to travel all around the world, purchase extremely expensive items, and sometimes just throw money away on obviously useless stuff, while not having to work as all the regular people do. Social media platforms often showcase idealized versions of people's lives, highlighting wealth and success.

This can create unrealistic expectations and a skewed perception of normalcy, increasing the pressure to compete financially.

This kind of motivation can be used by some people in a way to get inspiration and believe in themselves, while on the other hand, many people are getting extremely exhausted by these comparisons and competitions, even anxious and miserable, because they do not get what they want and deserve, no matter how hard they work for it.

Money as a Source of Anxiety:

- Financial Insecurity:

Fear of not having enough money to cover basic needs can cause significant stress.

- Debt Burden:

High levels of personal debt, such as student loans or credit card debt, can lead to constant worry.

- Lifestyle Inflation:

The pressure to maintain a certain lifestyle, often fueled by social media, can create ongoing financial stress.



I believe that we all should remind ourselves once in a while that true happiness and fulfillment come from non-material aspects of life such as relationships, community, and a sense of purpose. Studies show that people who prioritize time with family and community involvement report higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who prioritize earning more money.

To break the harmful cycle, it is advised to:

1. Focus on Personal Goals:

Setting and pursuing individual financial goals based on personal values rather than societal expectations.

2. Gratitude Practice:

Regularly practicing gratitude for what one has can reduce the negative impact of comparison.

3. Mindfulness and Minimalism:

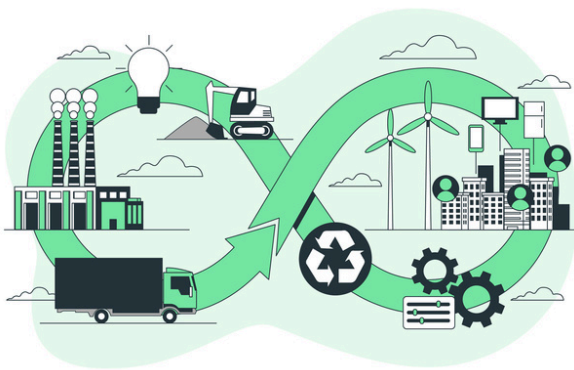
Embracing mindfulness and minimalism can help individuals find contentment and reduce the desire for excessive material wealth.



SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS: THE POWER OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

BY ANGELINA LOBANOVA

The article underscores important aspects such as waste minimization, energy efficiency and carbon footprint reduction. The article looks at various external and internal factors, affecting the implementation of Green SCM, as well as challenges faced by companies by integrating eco-friendly initiatives. Some examples of well-known corporations that are leading in implementing sustainable supply chains are considered.



Supply Chain Management (SCM) refers to the process of managing the flow of goods and services to and from an enterprise, which includes every aspect of the business, including the processes of transforming raw materials and components into finished products and the delivery of the final products to the end user [1]. An effective SCM can play a vital role in minimising the number of company activities, increasing customer value, and giving a competitive edge in the market.

Throughout the supply chain, supply management is pivotal to business growth because it has many sides. It induces efficiency and cost reduction by simplifying flaws and responding with lean resources, which helps the economy and environment.

Sustainable supply chain conduct, which is responsible and shows concern for the environment as well, will, in turn, improve the company's reputation and, at the same time, be able to set supply chain management, which is, to a great extent, quality-oriented, is therefore critically important [1].

The term green supply chain management (Green SCM) or eco-supply chain management is defined as using environmental thinking when dealing with supply chain management issues, such as implementing the ecological design of products, purchasing green materials and components, re-engineering manufacturing steps towards eco-friendly, and reverse logistics management of the product after its useful life.

Creating an environmentally friendly supply chain involves making decisions that cause the least damage to nature and are the goals of a personal supply chain, including swiftness, efficiency, profitability, and customer service.

The evolution of green supply chain management answers the demand for sustainability and the increasing need for industries to check their carbon footprints. Over the past few decades, several factors have driven the adoption of Green SCM practices:

1. Governments from different countries have regulations to curb pollution and deal with waste. Therefore, adhering to these provisions has enabled enterprises to develop an internal system whereby green practices become part of the supply chains.

2. Modern shoppers are more appreciative of their environment and therefore call for and prefer environment-friendly brands. This tendency among consumers to associate themselves with eco-friendly brands has resulted in enterprises adopting the policy of environment-oriented supply chain practices to gain competitive advantages over others.

3. Many businesses now involve Corporate Social Responsibility in their environmental, social, and sustainability activities to show their dedication to environmental issues and social jobs. This is legitimate through integrating green practices in the supply chain [2].

4. Even if initial investments in green technologies and compliance practices exist, Green SCM will drive cost savings in the long run. For example, a decrease in expenditures,

improved resource efficiency, less production, and lower operating costs can be a few of the working results of this approach.

5. Due to complex global supply chains, businesses must contemplate the repercussions of sourcing raw materials and manufacturing worldwide by location. Hence, it similarly should trigger some supply chain practices for sustainability.

6. Investors, executives, and shareholders emphasise sustainability issues such as climate change, water pollution, and waste management. The mounting expectations of stakeholders and the advent of Green SCM initiatives have led to the rising popularity of Green SCM strategies among companies.

7. Technology development has facilitated green supply chain practices by being more effective and resource-conscious. Say, providing big data analysis can optimise logistics and lower disposals.

The rise of Green SCM is a reaction to issues either from the external



environment or the internal, such as keeping pace with regulations, customer tastes, and the quest to be largely sustainable. Companies can be green and environmentally conscious in their supply chains by integrating sustainability and green practices into their operations to achieve long-term sustainability and meet the expectations of their stakeholders [3].

Green Supply Chain encompasses a range of key concepts and principles to minimise the environmental impact of supply chain operations while maximising efficiency and profitability. One of the central concepts of green SCM is waste reduction. Additionally, energy efficiency and carbon footprint reduction are fundamental elements that help create a more eco-friendly and sustainable supply chain, further aligning environmental goals with operational productivity.

Waste Reduction:

Minimising garbage emissions is a pivotal principle for Green SCM, and it includes measures to reduce the consumption of raw materials, energy, and excess reserves. Management of the return supply chain, ecological packaging, and partnerships are helping to decrease waste and expand production efficiency, ensuring sustainable development and environmental preservation.

Energy Efficiency:

Increasing energy efficiency assists in reducing negative impacts on the environment and, in general, reduces

total consumption. Implementing energy-saving technologies and equipment, using renewable energy resources, transportation optimisation, and workers' education contribute to forming a sustainable corporate culture and competitiveness for their business.

Carbon Footprint Reduction:

Carbon footprint reduction is one of the essential goals of Green SCM, which minimises greenhouse gas emissions. This goal could be achieved by optimising transport, exploiting the cleanest transportation methods, and cooperating with ecologically responsible partners. Measuring and monitoring greenhouse gas emissions is needed to determine the most effective strategies that could cut down harmful emissions and raise environmentally responsible companies.

These principles contribute not only to environmental sustainability but also to long-term business resilience and competitiveness.

However, implementing the Green SCM may be difficult for businesses. One of the problems may be the high costs of acquiring, producing, and operating eco-friendly technologies, equipment, and processes without any short-term payback. Some countries or regions have intricate and different environmental regulations that can be difficult to harmonise, thereby creating more obstacles to developing Green SCM worldwide.

It can be hard if good suppliers are not ready to change or need more capital. Besides, the need for more sustainable and environmentally friendly materials in some sectors and areas could also become a limiting factor to the green industry. Last but not least is the confusion brought by the need for standards for Green SCM practices and certifications, which inhibits the harmonised implementation of sustainable initiatives. To overcome these difficulties, comprehensive work and dedication from businesses are needed to properly bring green practices into the supply chain [1].

Addressing these problems requires a strategic plan involving investing in education and training, collaboration with suppliers and other stakeholders, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of Green SCM activities.

Innovations in Green SCM, such as green packaging, smarter delivery options, and recycling processes, increase company efficiency and play a big role in environment conservation for future generations. Many companies have shifted to green supply chain practices as one of the strategic actions to protect the environment and demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility. Here are some notable examples of companies in different sectors that are known for their environmentally friendly supply chain initiatives [4]:

Company	Practice
Walmart	The Walmart project is solely dedicated to ridding its supply chain of waste and emissions. It is also well known for its Gigaton Project, which aims to remove 1 gigaton of emissions by 2030. They have a goal to achieve zero emissions by 2040. Besides that, the company collaborates with its suppliers to improve sustainability and choose more clean energy [6].
IKEA	The Swedish furniture giant has a strong commitment to sustainability. They are known for using sustainable materials, implementing energy-efficient practices, and even selling solar panels and LED lighting products. Even on the operational level, the company pays attention to energy efficiency and waste reduction and engages suppliers who are committed to the company's sustainable goals [7].

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS:

THE POWER OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

UNILEVER	Unilever has set ambitious sustainability goals, such as making all of its plastic packaging recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2025, and sourcing 100% of its agricultural raw materials sustainably. Unilever's Sustainable Life Project targets reducing waste, CO2 emissions as well as water usage. This business strives to ensure transparency in all its supplier relationships, which means sourcing natural ingredients to improve its environmental practices. Besides, Unilever highly lays stress on a supply chain that is accountable and transparent [8].
AMAZON	Amazon is committed to using renewable energy for its operations and has launched programs like "Shipment Zero" to make all shipments net-zero carbon, aiming for 50% of all shipments to be net-zero by 2040. The organization is committed to energy sustainability in its operations and logistics centers by embracing the use of renewable sources of energy. Moreover, Amazon has encouraged its delivery team to use electric vehicles and rationally plan routes to minimize energy use [5].
PATAGONIA	This outdoor clothing and gear company is known for its strong commitment to sustainability. They have implemented initiatives like the Worn Wear program to encourage the reuse and recycling of their products. The firm uses only organic and recycled materials from providers authorized by the fair-trade certificate. Additionally, the brand ensures its supply chain goes through greater accountability, achieved through providing information such as where materials are coming from and who manufactures them [9].
SIEMENS	Siemens, a global technology company, has implemented a comprehensive sustainability strategy including reducing CO2 emissions, water consumption, and waste in production. Siemens enterprises into partnerships with suppliers to set up sustainability standards in the heart of the supply chain and track down the carbon emissions throughout its entire supply chain sequence [10].
COCA-COLA	The Coca-Cola Company has set ambitious sustainability goals, including using 100% recyclable or reusable lightweight packaging by 2030 and recyclable materials for its products. Moreover, the company has invested in water conservation projects and collaborates with its suppliers to improve water efficiency. Collaboration and strategic partnerships can create a more sustainable and resilient food system, tackling water scarcity and environmental degradation. [11] Sustainable raw materials harvesting is an ongoing priority at Coca-Cola. For instance, the company buys sugar and citrus fruits from organic farms.

Successful Green SCM implementation varies based on industry, company size, and specific goals. These companies develop different green supply chain practices that they integrate into their operations to achieve their goal.

In summary, Green SCM is about aligning supply chain practices with sustainability goals that benefit businesses and the environment.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS: UNDERSTANDING AND ENHANCING WELL-BEING

BY MOTAHAREH GHOLIZADEHSARVANDI

Happiness is more than fleeting joy; it's a deep sense of harmony between thoughts, words, and actions. Explore the psychology of happiness, its biological and environmental determinants, and practical steps like gratitude, exercise, and meaningful relationships to boost mental well-being and live a more fulfilling life.

“Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.” – Mahatma Gandhi

Happiness is a fundamental human pursuit, and understanding its underlying mechanisms can lead to a more fulfilling life. This article explores the psychology of happiness, its determinants, and practical steps to enhance mental well-being.

What is happiness?

Happiness is a healthy state with a sense of satisfaction and joy. It may be attained by living righteously and actualizing oneself. Today's psychology considers happiness an internal mental experience involving emotions and thoughts, unlike momentary pleasure or extreme feelings of joy.

What is the purpose of the psychology of happiness?

First, let us begin with defining the psychology of happiness; it is often referred to as positive psychology—this is the study of happiness that examines what makes people's lives worth living, how they can achieve happiness and well-being overall

while focusing on life's positive aspects like qualities, social institutions attempting to understand and encourage such contexts that are conducive for individual development as well as human welfare.

What are the determinants of Happiness?

Biological Aspects: This entails research into how genetics, neurotransmitters, and brain structures influence someone's level of joy.



Research indicates that genetics significantly determines an individual's baseline happiness, known as the "happiness set point." Neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine and brain structures like the prefrontal cortex regulate mood

and emotional responses.

Psychological Aspects: These delve into individual features and conducts, such as resilience, gratitude, and mindfulness, which contribute to satisfaction with life.

Environmental Aspects: Looking at societal factors such as poverty or high levels of unemployment that can affect our level.

How can we achieve better mental health and a higher level of happiness?

Have you ever asked yourself what you can do for peace when your well-being is struggling? Well, here are some tips for you that you can consider:

1. **Be thankful (The ability of gratitude):** Expressing gratitude has been found to affect mental health positively. One can commence by writing three things they are grateful for each day. This simple exercise can help change pessimism with optimism about life and enhance one's general view.

2. **Stay active:** Regular physical activity contributes to physical and mental wellness. Plan for at least 30

minutes of moderate exercise most days during the week. Exercise like walking, jogging, swimming, or cycling all contribute to your overall wellbeing. Besides that, yoga or tai chi are good for relieving pain and promoting body flexibility.

3. **Get in touch:** Investing in nurturing relationships with families and friends is essential for mental health.

Consider joining community groups, clubs, or volunteer opportunities where you can make new acquaintances and form meaningful relationships. When you surround yourself with positive and supportive individuals, it will be beneficial for your mental health.

4. **Pay attention to your diet:** A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains provides essential nutrients that support mental health. Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish, nuts and seeds are particularly beneficial. Additionally, staying hydrated by drinking adequate water throughout the day is important for overall well-being.

5. **Limit negativity around you:** In today's digital age, it's important to remember that excessive screen time can negatively affect mental health. Think about setting limits on your screen time and focusing more on activities that improve well-being, such as going outside for a walk, gardening, or joining other people. Also, try as much as possible to avoid negative people but instead flock yourself with positivity.



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS: UNDERSTANDING AND ENHANCING WELL-BEING

All in all, the psychology of happiness aims to enable individuals to understand and live a satisfying life full of joy. It involves looking at what makes people happy and attempting to use this knowledge to improve individual mental health and the general welfare of society. Therefore, making this happen through research, education, and practical interventions leads to a world where many individuals may feel fulfilled yet do not know.

Did you know?!

Research has shown that approximately 50% of a person's happiness is determined by genetics. This is known as the "happiness set point," which establishes a base level of contentment to which people generally return after experiencing peaks and valleys in their emotional state.

The psychology of happiness provides valuable insights into how individuals can lead more fulfilling lives. Understanding the determinants of happiness and implementing practical strategies can enhance our mental well-being and contribute to a happier society.



CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS AS A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT

BY ANEL UKIBAYEVA

This article explores the experiences of first-year students as they navigate the challenges of university life, emphasizing the importance of building relationships for personal growth and academic success. It highlights common struggles and discusses coping strategies, including seeking support from peers.

As September 2023 arrived in Cassino, the city's streets filled with new students worldwide. Amidst the bustling scene bursting with the energy of the new chapter they were entering, they were welcomed to the university by management staff, professors and seniors volunteering to guide them.



For students fresh out of high school, transitioning to a distinctly different system of education, with just a bit more high stakes than they are used to, it should be said that the energy above was palpable in being dosed with excitement and a great deal of uncertainty. The weight of their expectations and fear of challenges waiting for them ahead hung heavy in the air, mingling in the aroma of coffee in the city on the way to the university building for the morning lectures.

Before bringing the obvious challenges in the form of studies, intricate systems, guides to follow, etc., into the conversation, mentioning the jarring difference between international students and the new set of responsibilities sensed in Italian high school graduates is essential. It is important to note how various networking methods are practised among the students because they need to build strong social relationships from the get-go.

This article delves into various challenges the students face, from balancing academic demands and social opportunities to the realities of the networking experience on university grounds.

In the early stages of their university experience, first-year students can delve into the myriad of networking and socializing experiences that influence their outlook on their further steps to achieve academic and personal growth. The reason they jumpstart their social life with rigour from the first semester is that the first semester, statistically speaking, can be the best time to build lasting relationships. Consider how every

first-year student, eager to bond with their peers, will seek close friends with whom to create a community.

From the excitement of orientation week, with the university creating opportunities for students to socialize, to the challenging lectures with strict professors that lead students to share their struggles with the subject, each encounter contributes to their evolving sense of self and purpose in an academic context.

While some effortlessly navigate the university's social landscape, diving into the learning cultures of various international students and taking the first steps to make friendships, others flounder in unfamiliar waters. Social integration comes naturally for those who swim like a fish in the water, as they have a clean slate for quickly establishing fresh acquaintances and opportunities.

For those overwhelmed by the differing challenges of the new academic rigour and social landscape, most find solace in connecting to seniors and their advice, as they show a shortcut way to relieve the stress.



In an interview with some of the first-year undergraduates, they described various difficulties and adjustments that helped them.

For international students, the obvious obstacles include adapting to the mentality of a new country, language barriers, and everyday communication with non-English speakers. Cultural adjustments to customs and norms, tradition or etiquette; academic differences that clash with the foundation acquired in their home countries; financial challenges due to currency exchange or navigating the Italian rental market while being ill-versed in the country's real estate procedures – all of these contribute to the everyday struggles faced by each international student in Cassino or Italy in general.

It is also important to note that many students in Cassino, especially international students, find homesickness as one of the main sources of their hardships. Being away from family, friends and familiar grounds can trigger a longing for familiarity. Coping with distance and time zones while trying to establish a support network in a new country can be emotionally taxing and in no way an easy feat.

Students' adjustments to all the obstacles mentioned above incorporate immersing themselves in Italian culture through various programs, cultural events, and

increased interactions with residents. In March, I conducted a survey to better understand how students were adapting to the various challenges they faced and to gather insights into the resources they found most helpful.

The students who responded to the survey believed it was best to seek academic support services, such as tutoring or language courses, to bridge the gaps in their academic knowledge. Additionally, forming close bonds with senior international students can affect your planning and approach to the university's academic and networking systems.

However, most advice is to trust your gut when navigating such obstacles. Often, for most who find it hard to adjust to a pace like their peers, the learning curve turns into a competition, and getting an advantage from the student life turns into a race. For similar situations, the system of stepping stones and opportunities turns into a system that separates people. Therefore, maintaining an open mind regarding your new opportunities and experiences without letting small hurdles taint your progress is immensely important.

In such an environment, students often unknowingly test their resilience and adaptability. Their encounters with the kinds, as mentioned earlier, of challenges as a new adult navigating through the already established social

and academic landscape is a good testament to that.

However, there is one hurdle that, regardless of nationality, most students (both Italian and international) can relate to.

One such challenge is networking. Networking presents a significant challenge to any student, regardless of their nationality. Many students, particularly those from smaller rural areas, enter university with minimal experience in professional networking. It may be due to a lack of exposure to professional networking opportunities, or they may feel intimidated by the prospect of contacting professors or industry professionals on their own.



Although it does not necessarily hinder their ability to build strong and valuable connections with the closest community, it may be a disadvantage. Since their challenges already prove hard without adding the networking

systems into the mix, reaching out to professors, and attending network events in hopes of seeking potential mentors can also feel daunting and unfamiliar.

However, being hesitant towards a systematic approach to networking does not necessarily mean that students miss its significance. In the survey mentioned above, one student clearly stated that networking plays a pivotal role in a student's journey as it opens doors to various opportunities, both the professional and personal aspects of the person. Another one mentioned that it is a way to achieve support from a formed community while exchanging ideas and sharing experiences to develop oneself continuously.

While those answers vary in their outlook on networking, both students realize that, in general, networking brings quite a lot to the table. In addition, as answers vary, the types of networking experiences differ in their kind. From career fairs and student associations to online platforms and simple social gatherings, networking is woven into any opportunity that provides a socializing experience, a chance to meet people, and the importance of fostering significant connections. Networking expands one's social circle and is the first step in gaining an advantage in a professional circle. Through

networking, experiences provided by the university or created in the community, students gain valuable insights and access to resources that can pave the way for future internships, jobs, and mentorship opportunities.

In conclusion, manoeuvring the obstacles of university life, whether you are an Italian or an international student, requires resilience to any change and a willingness to seek support. Acknowledging your struggles is common, and finding solace in advice from those who have advanced from that stage can be an immense relief. Relief, if not an immediate solution, is understanding that you are not alone and do not have it all figured out instantly. Out of a fear of sounding cliché, relishing the journey itself before you come to a solution can make the path more interesting. Therefore, in this instance, whether it is hard or easy, for both Italian and international first-year students alike, creating your community while trusting your gut in the future is the best advice we can achieve in this article overall. No matter the hardship of socialization or an academic career, relieving the stress when you seek a solution can be immensely rewarding as a student.

AI AND THE FUTURE OF WORKFORCE

BY HAWA SHAMS

AI is rapidly transforming industries, with 25% of U.S. jobs at risk of automation within five years. While AI promises increased productivity and cost savings, concerns about job displacement, misinformation, and societal impacts remain significant challenges.

The topic of AI advancements has been dominating the news and discussions lately, that AI is doing far more than just completing simple tasks like finishing emails. ChatGPT has taken an IQ test and its score was sky-high. The verbal IQ of the ChatGPT was 155, superior to 99.9% of the test takers [1]. It is estimated that roughly 25% of all jobs will be replaced by AI, and that is just in the next 5 years, and some people worry that AI could help displace far more jobs than it will help create [2].

The rise of tools like ChaGPT and mid-journey has created a way for anyone to create essays, art, and other types of content without needing the individual skill or training normally associated with these tasks. So the question is, what can AI realistically do today? This is about to blow your mind because AI is about to disrupt almost every single industry we know of. Currently, 25% of work tasks could be automated by AI in the US according to Goldman Sachs Research [3]. Marketing and advertising are one of the biggest industries out there and every single company in the world participates to some degree. According to Deloitte's



annual CMO Survey, 13.6% of a company's budget is spent on advertising, which is the exact advertising that the AI-generative tools will be generating. Creating the image for the AI-generated ad costs about 10 times less than the traditional methods [4]. So AI is used to create valuable images that are being used in high-profile advertising campaigns today. This technology is also being used in banking like at HSBC, which is cutting out human error. AI's role in television and film production is a key point of negotiations between the Writers Guild of America and the studios. Already over 11000 writers and creatives have gone on strike.

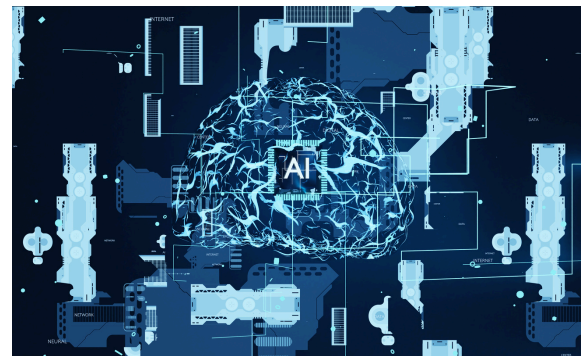
So the ultimate question then becomes, will AI replace our jobs?

And the answer is yes and no. It depends. Overall here are the jobs and industries that are the most at risk according to Goldman Sachs: Office administration, legal, business and financial operations, design, art, media, architecture and engineering, and any jobs where you find yourself doing boring and repetitive tasks are the ones most at risk of being replaced by AI if they have not been already. Moreover, companies are laying off workers not because they want to replace them, but because they want to invest more in AI, which means cutting elsewhere, and prioritizing productivity.

But here is the silver lining in all of this; AI cannot fully function without people. The more people it replaces, the more inaccurate it becomes over time, a phenomenon called hallucinations [5]. This is where tools like ChatGPT make stuff up; they do not have anything real to base their information on because they got rid of the people creating it in the first place. This is why people at OpenAI, the creators of ChatGPT believe that it has the possibility of creating far more jobs than it potentially takes away.

But is losing jobs to AI the biggest problem? Well, this is the stuff that economists have already predicted in the future. We are expecting that. The real threat to society is how we perceive reality. AI forms of manipulation are so accessible and

their products are so convincing. The burden of determining what is factual and what is not falls on the individual [6]. These tools are so democratized which means anyone could use them and produce fake news, fake information, fake evidence, fake people, and fake anything. It has huge implications for society.



But despite the negatives AI can be used to do good in the world as well. AI has been able to map every single known protein, about 200 million of them which solved one of biology's biggest mysteries which will eventually lead to cures for diseases we do not have cures for [7].

It's important to remember that these tools are here to stay, and the people most at risk of losing anything are those who choose to ignore them.

YOUTH SPACE-SAFE SPACE

BY MOTAHAREH GHOLIZADEHSARVANDI

Creating Safe Spaces: A Guide to Personal and Collective Well-being. In today's world, fostering sexual safety and emotional security is essential for personal growth and a healthy society. By setting boundaries, using inclusive language, and avoiding stereotypes, we can build safer environments for everyone. Learn key steps to creating these spaces and discover the 5 D's model for intervening in harassment situations. Let's work together to promote safety and respect for all.

How to create a safe space?

Living in a society where we interact with others daily, learning to care for ourselves and others is essential to creating a better world. Sexual safety is a matter of utmost concern, and it can be challenging to protect ourselves. However, creating a safe space can ensure everyone lives a healthy life and improve personal growth. Let's build a safe and secure environment for ourselves and others. Here are some tips to create a safe space:

1. First and foremost, set your boundaries and respect them. If someone asks you something and you are uncomfortable with it, say "no." Don't let anyone invade your safe bubble.



2. Also, avoid using generic masculine terms. For example, if you don't know the gender of the person you're addressing, it's best not to use "him." In a group setting, refrain from using "guys" and instead use "people" or the gender-neutral pronoun "they/them."

3. Be mindful of binaries and avoid using the terms "ladies and gentlemen" or "girls and boys." Don't limit sexualities to just male and female; there are many other sexualities out there. Treat everyone equally.

4. It's important to avoid using stereotypical phrases that perpetuate harmful biases. For example, phrases like "crying like a girl, throw like a girl, breadwinner, Boys will be boys" reinforce gender roles that limit individuals and can be hurtful. Let's strive to use language that uplifts and respects everyone.

5. It's also important to pay attention to hindsight bias. This means we often think that all situations are predictable and underestimate the likelihood of something happening. For example, if you go out alone 100 times and nothing happens, but something bad happens on the 101st

time, you might say "I should have known. Everyone told me not to go alone." Don't fall into this trap.

6. How a person dresses should not be a basis for others to make assumptions about their thoughts and approach them. Regardless of whether the attire looks wild or provocative, it does not give anyone the right to harass them. Dressing up can be influenced by various factors such as weather conditions, comfort, or confidence. What may seem provocative to some people could be the attire that boosts someone's confidence.

7. Lastly, avoid victim-blaming. It is not the victim's fault and should not be held responsible for any negative experiences they may have had. It is not their fault if something wrong happens to someone; they should not be blamed for it.

5D Model

It's important to know how to help someone who is being harassed, especially if they are unable to react or freeze under social or personal circumstances. Before attempting to help, make sure you are safe yourself. Here are the 5 D's to follow:

1. **Distract:** If you see someone being harassed, you can distract the harasser by coughing loudly, dropping a bottle, or standing between them in a subway. This will give the person being harassed time to react if they are frozen.

2. **Delegate:** If possible, involve other

people, especially authorities like the police or teachers. Explain the situation and ask them to help.

3. **Direct intervention:** If you feel ready and safe, you can talk directly to the harassing person. Do not speak on behalf of the victim or say they are uncomfortable. Instead, tell the harasser that their behaviours are inappropriate and that they are responsible for their actions.

4. **Delay:** If the harassment is already over, wait for some time and then reach out to the person who has been harassed. Give them space to talk about their feelings and make suggestions if needed, but do not make decisions on their behalf. Remind them that it's not their fault and that they're not responsible for what happened to them. You can also comfort them by asking them if they want hot beverages or want to walk. Sometimes, even making eye contact can help.

5. **Document:** If you witness harassment, try to document it openly or discreetly. You can document by making a video or photo and noting down the time and date of the incident, the physical appearance of the harasser, or any witnesses who were present. Even small details like the street's name or the colour of their clothes can help if something worse happens later.

In conclusion, creating a safe space requires a collective effort from everyone. By setting boundaries,

using inclusive language, avoiding stereotypes, paying attention to hindsight bias, avoiding victim-blaming, and following the 5 D's model, we can make a difference and create a safe and secure environment for ourselves and others. Sexual safety is a fundamental human right, and we must work together to ensure that everyone can live a healthy life and reach their full potential.



Thank you, Professor De Rosa: Celebrating Our Founder and Dean



Prof. MARCELLO DE ROSA

A special thank you to Prof. Marcello De Rosa for his insightful leadership as Director of the Bachelor Programme in Economia e Commercio, and especially for his passion and enthusiasm in launching and supporting the CLEC Magazine.

Warm regards, and best of luck with all of your future projects!

The CLEC Magazine Team

We are grateful for your contribution and congratulations on your graduation



ANGELINA LOBANOVA



**SOFYA PETRUSSEVICH
and IBRAGIM ALIEV**

We want to express our sincere gratitude for their invaluable contributions to the magazine.

Angelina's leadership as Editor-in-Chief has been instrumental in shaping our success. Sofya's creative talents in the visual layout team have truly elevated the magazine. And Ibragim's thoughtful articles have added great value to our content.

Congratulations on your graduation! We look forward to seeing where your talents lead you.

*Warm regards,
The CLEC Magazine Team*

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