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FEBRUARY 2018



Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor of Switzerland.

Photo: DW

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR DORIS LEUTHARD: «BE CURIOUS, BE CRITICAL AND VISIT FOREIGN COUNTRIES!»

The 2018 International Student Projects attracted a host of VIP speakers to the preparatory seminars of Insight China, Focus India, connectUS and exploreASEAN. Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard opened proceedings with an inspiring and fascinating discussion of Switzerland's international trade relations and opportunities for future graduates. During the week the students welcomed many CEO's, diplomats and experts. The preparatory seminar closed on Friday with a panel discussion including National Councillor and former President of the National Council, Christa Markwalder.

The International Student Projects have been organizing remarkable speeches since 2001, but this year, they wrote FHNW history when a serving Federal Councillor held a speech. On Monday morning, a relaxed and approachable Doris Leuthard filled the room with around 200 students, staff, and guests with anticipation and excitement.

She motivated the delegations to continue on the path of internationalization and praised the FHNW for its international outlook.

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With political insights and personal recommendations, Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard elaborated on trade relations and bilateral agreements between Switzerland and key partners including China, India, the US and ASEAN. For many nations such as China and India, Switzerland has acted as a pioneer in negotiating international agreements. But the work is not done here, she emphasized how vital bilateral agreements are for a country of Switzerland's size - thinking that sufficient trade can happen within our national borders is illusionary.

After her speech, she was ready to pose for some pictures with the project managers of Insight China, Focus India, connectUS and exploreASEAN.

Our gratitude for motivating Doris Leuthard to open the Preparatory week goes to the Project Team Manager of Insight China: Lauro Muff told the guests how a bit of courage and a lot of motivation led him to approach Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard – and he succeeded. On a Saturday morning, he approached her in her home garden and told her about the Student Projects - she agreed to have a speech. A great lesson and inspiration for all the present students.

Highly appreciated was also the attendance of Federal Councillor and former President of the Federal Council of Switzerland: Christa Markwalder. She joined the panel discussion on Friday afternoon. With her political background, she contributed with valuable insights on new technologies and their effect on the labour market. Read more about the panel discussion and the diverse participants on page 3.

Not only politicians, but many other interesting speakers contributed to the seminars throughout the week.

On Monday, Insight China had the great opportunity to have an interview with Dr. Uli Sigg, former Swiss Ambassador to China and creator of the most significant collection of contemporary Chinese art globally, who provided insights into his interesting and diverse life.

On the same day, the Focus India delegation had the pleasure to listen to Dr. Balz Strasser, former CEO of Swissnex India, and CEO of Pakka AG. He not only provided fascinating insights into the activities of Swissnex, but also told the delegation about some personal experiences of living in India. The day after, Prof. Dr. Edy Portmann, who is leading transdisciplinary research focusing on cognitive computing and its application to cities, introduced the Focus India delegation to smart cities and gave some surprising insights regarding the technological future. Read more on page 6.

On Tuesday, Insight China welcomed Minister Counsellor Gu Hui from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Switzerland, who touched upon the Swiss Chinese relations while the day closed with Hans-Jörg Bertschi, CEO & President of Bertschi Group. During the week, the seminar was able to welcome Lu Xiankun former Chinese Ministry of Commerce and Permmannar Mission to the WTO, Asia Society and William R. Keller, former GM Roche China, and Babara Lüthi, SRF Moderator, amongst other excellent speakers. Read more about these speakers and the Belt and Road Initiative starting on page 9.

The connectUS delegation was able to interact with FHNW graduate Michael Schranz, who is Head of Business Development at "Apps with love", an award-winning specialist for creating user-optimized apps. A special honor as Michael Schranz is one of the founding members of the connectUS project. Additionally, Kevin Leuthard and Mirco Klaus from KPMG, silver partner of connectUS, talked about the blockchain, a new technology that can simplify life. It works in a decentralized network and guarantees security through broadcasting all new information to all participants.

"ASEAN member states are like a football team, they work together but still, each player wants to be the best" - Mr. Timbul Situmorang, Minister-Counsellor of the Indonesian Embassy, taught the exploreASEAN delegation some valuable lessons about the dynamics of the ASEAN region. He also demonstrated how Indonesia can be a vast and interesting market for Switzerland, and how bilateral trade agreements have improved over the past five years. Moreover, Ms. Ngô Minh Nguyệt, the Counsellor of the Vietnamese Embassy to the Confederation of Switzerland, provided valuable business insights into Vietnam. She presented some significant facts about the Vietnamese ecosystem as well as Vietnams way to prosperity.

It was an honor to have all these and many more fascinating speakers on board. They hugely contributed to a substantial, memorable week and definitely inspired the delegations to keep looking beyond borders. On behalf of all delegations, the project teams would like to sincerely thank everyone for their contribution. ●JT/NK



Welcoming speech with all international student projects. Photo: NL

PANEL DISCUSSION ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR IMPACTS

«DATA IS THE OIL OF TOMORROW»

Artificial Intelligence, blockchain and digitalization might often be used as buzz words. They are no longer just futuristic ideas but here today – and we should have more than a general understanding about them. Our guests discussed ethical questions, use cases and possible paths these technologies might take in the future in a dynamic panel discussion on Friday afternoon.

The participants in the panel discussion were either experts in new technologies or political influencers of which all share the same interest – future technologies, the challenges and opportunities they offer. The panel was formed by Christa Markwalder (Swiss National Councillor), André Wolke (CEO and Co-Founder Validity Labs), Sven Mentl (Technology Architect at Accenture), Knut Hinkelmann (Programme Head Master of Science in Business Information Systems, FHNW), Cyrille Wetter (FHNW student) and Michel Jeive (Head of International Student Projects, FHNW) who moderated the discussion.

National Council Christa Markwalder joked that as she does not have a driver's license, she is excited to welcome self-driving cars. But what will happen if the self-driving system of these new cars, are programmed on wrong assumptions and hence it evades an object just by hitting another one? This is an ethical question on principles, for which no answer has been found yet.

The discussion about new technologies always goes hand in hand with the discussion about impacts on the future workforce. Artificial intelligence does not just use people's data, it will make some existing jobs obsolete. These challenges of new technologies are recognised by politicians and thus leaves room for a lot of discussion in terms of future work practices. However, things will change and new different jobs will emerge.

Knut Hinkelmann argues, that we should be flexible as a society and adapt to changes by finding replacements to address the challenges that the new technologies bring.

New technologies are embraced by many people across the world but the negative impacts of these technologies are often ignored due to their immense added value. In a data-driven economy, ownership of personal data is already a major wealth factor for technology companies and central to the business cases for a multitude of technology start-ups and major players such as Facebook and Google. Andreas Wolke pointed out that most individuals care little about their data privacy and share indiscriminately. Thus, it can be said that data is the oil of tomorrow.

A perfect example of the impact of new digital technologies is the fast-emerging blockchain technology which is based on chained hash blocks, an application in the field of computer science. Today, mainly used in the environment of crypto currencies, blockchains provide a perfect way to implement immutable chronological databases according to Cyrille Wetter. However, blockchains also entail some drawbacks because every blockchain node (i.e. person in the chain) has to store and validate the whole history which is around 100 Gigabyte big. This requires massive computing power and electricity usage. On the other hand, this validation can be needed in use cases like E - Voting, where every vote needs to be valid anyway. Although Switzerland has no electronic voting platform, this would be a great opportunity.

Nevertheless, curiosity about how great improvements, convenient solutions and new technologies will affect our daily life's in the near future remain on a high level. •JT/NK



Panel discussion: Michael Jeive, Sven Mentl, Knut Hinkelmann, Christa Markwalder, André Wolke, Daniel Meier, Cyrille Wetter.

CAREER FAIR

14 PARTNERS PARTICIPATED IN THE CAREER FAIR ON JOINT FRIDAY



PROF. DR. EDY PORTMANN

«WE CAN INVENT OUR FUTURE»



www.focusindia.ch

Prof. Dr. Edy Portmann left the Focus India delegation speechless and thoughtful with a powerful presentation on our technological future, smart cities and artificial intelligence. Society should be involved in the evolution of smart cities, our environment, our lives. As cultural backgrounds influence responsiveness to smart tools, research and education has to be extended everywhere – and in Switzerland, we could do more.



Edy Portmann and delegates discussing the smart city workshop. Photo: DW

“I want to build the future by doing it and involving people”, Edy Portmann presented with an inspiring attitude towards our technological future. Although many might dread the digital transformation being everywhere and unstoppable, society can be optimistic: According to Edy, it is up to us how fast it proceeds, and in what direction we want to lead it. One thing is for sure: we are the generation who has to deal with the application of artificial intelligence.

Should we worry about artificial intelligence making us redundant, or becoming too powerful? Not necessarily: The delegation learned that technological advancements might make our life easier in a similar way that the invention of letters once did. And just as contact lenses or a heart pacemaker artificially enhance our health today, so might today’s unimaginable tools be normality in 5-10 years’ time.



Is this a possible future enhanced by AI?

Film by Keiichi Matsuda

Smart cities are socio-technical systems, which is why their design requires trans-disciplinary approaches. Edy explained that the best possible results will be achieved by building a symbiosis between smart tools and humans: We do have very different strengths to machines. In the future, we will learn from machines, and machines will learn from us. The possibilities are endless. While a lot of capital is invested in artificial intelligence research in Asia, the mindset in Switzerland is often a bit skeptical. The Focus India delegation learned not to be afraid, but to embrace the future. And don't forget: “If you want to build the future, invent it” (Edy Portmann).

Prof. Dr. Edy Portmann emphasizes the importance of a trans-disciplinary approach to encourage cross-sector pollination. He has studied in various disciplines, holds a PhD in computer science and has worked for companies like Swisscom, PwC and EY. He is part of the Human-IST Institute of the University of Fribourg, where he leads transdisciplinary research focusing on cognitive computing and its application to cities.

The project team wishes Edy all the best and thanks him for the impressive speech and inspiring words! ●NK

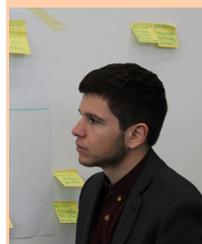


Staff and delegates interacting.

Photo: DW

KEY LEARNING

LUKAS BERTINI - BUSINESS ENGINEER



Inspired

Lukas Bertini
Photo: DW

There already is a lot of technology in the developing process which most of us probably would not think about at the moment. The society should be in the centre of future developments, for example the target of smart cities should be fulfilling the everyday needs of the people living there.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES



Daniel Ducrey, CEO Steiner AG speaking to the delegation.

Photo: DW/NK

Swiss managers working in India face various challenges on personal and professional levels. In this case, it is crucial to remember who the stranger in India is, and develop some coping strategies. For Daniel Ducrey, CEO of Steiner AG, it was being open-minded while staying himself. His Indian employees Ankush Vijayvargiya and Kalim Qureshi, who have lived in Switzerland for several years, made the experience the other way round – and were shocked that one has to pay for garbage bags in Switzerland.

Amol Thakare from Sulzer outlined the key factors of India's competitiveness in his speech on Wednesday afternoon: A skilled workforce, cost effectiveness, favorable government policies and Prime Minister Modi's "Make in India" campaign can help a foreign business to establish itself in India. Moreover, since India is home to a vast amount of IT and digitalization knowledge and hubs, expanding to India can indeed be a very interesting option for a Swiss company.

Not only Sulzer has taken this step, so did Steiner AG, a leading real estate developer and contractor. The Focus India delegation was introduced to their expanding history by the CEO Daniel Ducrey himself.



Delegates listening to the speech of Daniel Ducrey

Photo: DW

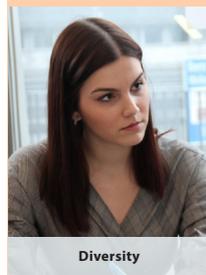
Before becoming the CEO of the group, Mr Ducrey lived in India for three years, where he was responsible for expanding into the promising market with Steiner India. In 2010, Steiner became part of the Hindustan Construction Company (HCC) group, which undertakes large-scale civil engineering and infrastructure projects such as hydropower plants or highways, in India. Mr Ducrey appreciates the complementary know-how of Steiner and HCC, which successfully brings together competences.

Yet before the smooth running of the business in India, Mr Ducrey faced various challenges during his time in Mumbai: The local business people immediately categorized the company with the Swiss origin as a wealthy business and negotiated accordingly. He also had to get used to different hierarchical powers in India, suggesting that "the boss decides and all others do".

In his positive presentation, Daniel Steiner told the delegation how he tried to accept the differences but stayed himself, for example by wearing his normal business clothes – because, after all, he is still a Swiss businessman in India.

KEY LEARNING

IVANA STANIC - INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT



Diversity

Ivana Stanic
Photo: NK

Various presentations throughout the week impressively demonstrated how diverse India is. It is not India, it is Indias, and the vast dimensions of the country will allow to explore new worlds within it. The fact that there are hundreds of languages astonishes me!

On the other hand, the Focus India delegation could listen to two Indian businessmen living in Switzerland. Ankush Vijayvargiya and Kalim Qureshi, enjoy their life working for Steiner in Switzerland. Before arriving here, most information about Switzerland had been gleaned from the Bollywood industry (Switzerland is a very popular destination in Bollywood movies!).

“By the time the Indian employees are ready to work, the Swiss ones are leaving the office.”

Ankush Vijayvargiya and Kalim Qureshi

Listening to their anecdotes was both extremely interesting and entertaining: It was, for instance, unthinkable for them to start the working day at 8 am.

Being used to the Indian way of starting any professional matters with personal talks and bonding, the two were normally more productive towards the end of the day – the time the Swiss colleagues left the office. Other surprises included the fact that people do not immediately leave the table after finishing a meal in a restaurant. The lack of honking, strangers greeting them on the street, a strong sense of privacy and ghost towns in the evening all seemed strange at first but quite normal now.

Hearing these stories helped the delegation to better understand some cultural differences between India and Switzerland, but even more than that, it once again became clear that acceptance and a bit of humour can help a lot when encountering a new culture. ●NK



www.focusindia.ch



Delegation during company visit at Franke.

Photo: DW

MAKE IT WONDERFUL!

FRANKE invited Focus India to visit their headquarters in Aarburg and left the delegation impressed with their authenticity and corporate identity, which was evident all over the campus.

Founded more than 100 years ago by Hermann Franke, the company stayed within the family. This enabled the firm to concentrate solely on customer satisfaction and not be pressured by the shareholders and stock markets. When you enter the building, you can already feel how the happiness of their customers comes first.



Make it wonderful with Luca Sigrist

Photo: DW

After having a coffee, made by their own coffee systems, International HR Manager Patricia Catto shared her personal career path and how Franke uses employee engagement surveys to ensure that the employees stay innovative.

"Unleash your Imagination!"

With a focus on Kitchen Systems, one of Franke's five company divisions, the virtual workshop Innovation Manager Alessandro Donnino, based in the PoliHub Milano, helped the delegation to create the kitchen of the future. "Prototype fast" proved to be a useful mantra - fast prototyping allows fast feedback and faster progress.

With the future bringing challenges as well as opportunities in the fields of internet of things (IoT), big data and smart cities, Franke sees its role as a manufacturer of smart kitchens, a subcategory of smart homes. The Focus India delegation was not only highly impressed with the modern and inviting company site, but also with the warm welcome and professional speeches. During the workshop, it became clear that Franke is far spread internationally with Trish from Canada introducing us to Franke, Alessandro from Milan taking us through the workshop and the delegation, that will visit Franke in India. Thank you Franke, for providing the delegation with great hospitality, insights and valuable lessons.

●DW

IMPRESSIONS



Project Teams and Marc Blaser, CEO of Blaser Swisslube, a sponsor of all four projects, after his keynote. Photo: NL



Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard with Timo Mühlethaler, Samira Märki, Caroline Niederhauser, Lauro Muff organisers of the joint elements of the preparatory seminar. Photo: NL



Valentin Gina, Sina Ritter, Ivana Stanic. Photo: DW



Manuel Güggi, Adrian Kaufmann. Photo: MH



Stephan Kühne, Stefan Känel. Photo: JT



Panel discussion in cooperation with Asia Society Switzerland. Photo: NL



exploreASEAN delegates after winning the competition. Photo: JT



Delegation Insight China.

Photo: NL



Delegation connectUS.

Photo: TR



Apéro exploreASEAN. Photo: VA



Project Team Focus India. Photo: Riccardo Farsaci



Jessica Hostettler, Leandro Di Salvatore, Nathalie Löffel, Alex Ngu. Photo: CK



Manuel Bertschi.

Photo: DW/NK

INTERVIEW WITH DR. ULI SIGG

IMPRESSIONS ON CHINA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DR. ULI SIGG

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www.insightchina.ch

Insight China had the great opportunity to interview Dr. Uli Sigg. While at Schindler he negotiated the first joint venture between a state-owned enterprise of the People's Republic of China and a western company and served then as the Swiss Ambassador, he could give us a very broad insight of the Chinese culture and how business is done in China. Furthermore, Dr. Uli Sigg has formed the most substantial collection of contemporary Chinese Art with around 2200 works, of which he donated 1450 works to the M+ Museum in Hong Kong.



Lauro Muff and Dr. Uli Sigg.

Photo: NL

Who is Dr. Uli Sigg?

Dr. Uli Sigg was born in 1946 and grew up in Switzerland. He completed his studies with a Ph.D. of the University of Zurich Law Faculty. After having worked as a journalist and editor, he then joined the Schindler Group from 1977 to 1990. This is when Dr. Uli Sigg had the opportunity to be part of the first joint venture establishment between China and the West in 1980. In response to the question of how he perceived China at that time, he answered that China had an open-door policy and that it just has come out of the culture revolution as a very poor country. Few cars were allowed on the streets and everything was very monotonous. If you compare it to China of today, it definitely has gone through dramatic changes.

Schindler as first joint venture in China

As Schindler has been asked for the joint venture, so has its biggest competitor. The race of who is going to be accepted as the one has been launched. But why a Swiss firm has been chosen, Dr. Uli Sigg could not answer. What definitely left no doubt, is that Switzerland was among one of the most trustworthy partners to start a cooperation with. China just started its building phase. The need for arable land around the cities was high, but there were also ever-growing needs for more living areas. Consequently, China started to build high. The joint venture came in handy, not only because it brought in a foreign technology (the elevator), but also due to the foreign capital exchange.

Former Swiss Ambassador in China

After having worked for Schindler, Dr. Uli Sigg has been asked for a position as ambassador. With absolute no background in diplomacy it was a big surprise for him. He accepted the offer, in order to not only contribute to his country but also to do himself something good. In his perspective, the Swiss Chinese relations are and always were of paramount importance. Switzerland has been very important in the sense of development, as it also has been one of the first nations to help China. China needed a model, and Switzerland represented the suitable model. Dr. Uli Sigg is very passionate about China, which is not only shown by his huge work and life experience in China but also through his huge passion for Chinese contemporary art. ●NL



Yufan Jiang, Lauro Muff, Dr. Uli Sigg, Gregory Schmid, Thomas Loser. Photo: NL

GU HUI, MINISTER-COUNSELLOR AT EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN SWITZERLAND DISCUSSES

CHINESE SWISS RELATIONS AND OBOR



www.insightchina.ch

The ultimate goal of the BR Initiative is to build a community with a shared future for mankind, a thought championed by Xi Jinping in Geneva in January 2017. Up to now, around 100 countries and international organizations support and are involved in the BR Initiative.

What is OBOR?

In 2013, Chinese president Xi Jinping proposed a new economic framework that would connect China's Silk Road Economic Belt project across Central Asia to East Europe with its Maritime Silk Road through connected bodies of water from the South China Sea through the Indian Ocean all the way to the Mediterranean. In essence, these trade strategies focus on increasing China's connection with countries along the historical Silk Road in Eurasia, while creating a new Silk Road through Asia to South Asia and Africa.



Map of Silk Road - OBOR. Source: Economist

Chinese Swiss Relations and Perceptions of OBOR

Mr. Gu Hui, Minister-Counsellor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Switzerland, touched upon the Swiss Chinese relations and the perceptions of the BRI. He especially points out the improved relationship between China and Switzerland in matters of trade, finance, innovation, and infrastructure. In 1950, Switzerland was among the very first countries to recognize and establish new ties with China. In 1980, Switzerland was the first Western country to open a joint venture in China with the Schindler company. Nowadays, over 800 Swiss companies

operate in China. With the BR Initiative, Mr. Gu Hui highlights the beginning of a new era, of which not only Switzerland and China, but also many other countries profit from. The initiative aims to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Hereby, a wide consultation, a joint contribution and shared benefits are needed.



Mr. Gu Hui. Photo: NL

"With the spirit of mutual respect, treating each other as equals, mutual benefit and win-win, Chinese Swiss relations will play a pioneer role in the building of a new type of international relations."

In 2017 Xi Jinping said that, the Sino-Swiss relations have become a model for developing a friendly cooperation between countries with different social systems, different stages of development and different sizes. In April 2016, Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation, paid a state visit to China and both parties jointly decided to establish the strategic partnership for innovation. ●JH



Visit in China: Johann Schneider-Ammann and Xi Jinping (April 2016). Source: www.chinanews.com

ASIA SOCIETY PANEL DISCUSSION

CHINA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD



www.insightchina.ch

Today, China cannot be bypassed. It is becoming increasingly important in international affairs. As a major global force, China's strategy and its subsequent dealings can have extensive consequences for the rest of the world, so what does it include? What are the plans and actions of Xi Jinping's government, the key players and the reactions of leaders around the world? How strongly influenced is the Belt and Road Initiative by geopolitical aspects and how could it change relationships around the globe? Will China really become the new shining champion of free trade as a reaction to the United States' increasingly protectionist politics?

During a panel discussion, four experts discussed China's Role in the World: Qi Zhu Ammann (Managing Director Confucius Institute University of Basel), William R. Keller (Chairman of Coland Pharmaceuticals Ltd.), Prof. Michael Jeive (Head of the Swiss SME Research Center China and Head of International Projects) and Nico Luchsinger (Co-Director Asia Society Switzerland, Strategy and Programming) as moderator.

According to our panelists, there has been a dramatic shift in China over the past few years. China is increasingly growing towards becoming a super power or a world leader respectively. In the first part of the 20th century, China did not have the power nor the capability to emerge internationally. However, close to the 80s, China began to open up its borders. It became more aware of its power and strength, but did not aim to replace any other country. China strives for a peaceful development and harmonic environment.

Further the panelists argue, that China is the only current country conducting a coherent geopolitical strategy due to China's internal lead and internal security. Looking back to the 1960s, China did not have any fix allies. But today, China has an active role in the UN and joined the WTO. With the establishment of the AIIB organization, China has once again proven that it is a nation which can challenge globally, in this sense the IMF.



Qi Zhu Ammann, Michael Jeive, William R. Keller and Nico Luchsinger. Photo: NL

The panel discussion was organized in collaboration with the Asia Society Switzerland, which was established in 2016 as the first center of the global Asia Society in Europe. It is committed to exploring Asia's role in a multilateral world and to advancing the dialogue and strengthening partnerships among individuals and institutions in Switzerland and Asia. Across the fields of arts, culture, education and policy, they provide insights, promote collaboration and contribute to a deeper understanding of a part of the world that will shape our shared future.

●JH/NL

KEY LEARNINGS

HICHAM BANNY - LIFE SCIENCES TECHNOLOGY (MEDICAL COMPUTER SCIENCE)



New opinion about Chinese economy

Hicham Banny
Photo: JH

What impressed me most is the foresight and determination of the speakers about China's power and its geopolitical impact. The discussion has changed my opinion on the Chinese economy significantly.

JONAS BÜRGI - BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



Panel Discussion

Jonas Bürgi
Photo: JH

«What drives China's One Belt one Road initiative? Is China looking for economic growth, trying to enhance political partnerships or just taking an opportunity to step in the gap formed by Americas changing foreign policy agenda? Is Chinese soft power man-made by the its government or is it a by-product of the rising Country?» – Amongst many other topics, the questions above were discussed at Asia Society's panel discussion during the Insight China Prep Seminar.

COMPANY VISITS



Angela Aebersold, Trish Catto and Project Team at Franke Photo: Riccardo Farsacci



Delegation connectUS at Swisscom. Photo: MH



Delegation exploreASEAN at DT Swiss. Photo: VA



Delegation connectUS at Mexican Embassy. Photo: unknown



Tobias Gerhard, Benjamin Mak, Alex Ngu, Michael Kayser from Insight China at Bertschi AG. Photo: NL



Former Project Team member Haris Basic presenting to connectUS at Swisscom. Photo: MH



Delegation exploreASEAN at DT Swiss. Photo: JT



Florian Widmer, Thomas Wernli, Daniele Scarabello. Photo: DW



Luca Sigrist, Luca Herzig, Ike Garley at Franke. Photo: DW



Delegation exploreASEAN at DT Swiss. Photo: TF



Insight China Delegation greeted by Brugg Group CEO Urs Schell. Photo: NL



Delegation Insight China at Bertschi AG. Photo: NL

TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

“Technopreneurship is a simple entrepreneurship in a technology intensive context. It is a process of merging technology prowess and entrepreneurial talent and skills” (Selvarani & Venusamy, 2015).

Southeast Asia enables entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. In 2017, the region has provided 7.8 billion USD of funding for start-ups (Source: Tech in Asia), from which the greatest amount flew into the e-commerce, gaming and fintech sectors. The top two funded start-ups in Southeast Asia are: Grab, which is competing in the transportation industry and LAZADA, an e-commerce business, both are based in Singapore (Source: Tech in Asia).

Good business ideas should either solve a problem, be very innovative or it closes a gap in the market place. ASEAN is a prominent destination for creating new business in various fields.

In order to successfully launch a new business, an only recipe we must remember is the people who we meet plus what we create together.

“Relationships play a critical role in doing business in Southeast Asia region.”



exploreASEAN Team with the Counsellor of the Vietnamese Embassy Mdm. Minh Nguyệt. Photo: VA

TECHNOLOGICAL HISTORY

Tuck Seng Low discussed the technological history in order to provide the delegation with a complete picture. For instance, was the first ATM launched in London, in 1967 and is widely used nowadays. However, in Myanmar the first ATM only has been installed 6 years ago.

The 1960s and 1970s continued to be an important technological decade, especially for the computer development. The first microprocessor was born and early videogaming started. An interesting fact is that Asia embraced all of it, so started Japan to become a global leader across the entire value chain of consumer goods. End of the 1980s started the digitalization and Asia was deeply involved in all kind of new technology. The world wide web was launched around 10 years later and only little after, Amazon, the first meaningful e-tailer, greatly impacted the technological world.

TECHNOLOGICAL FUTURE

Looking into the technological future, which looks bright, organizations have several opportunities in following main areas: intelligent, digital and mesh. In the area of intelligence can trends such as artificial intelligence foundation, intelligent apps and analytics as well as intelligent things be found. In the digital world trends like digital twins, cloud to the edge, conversational platforms and immersive experience will evolve. Finally, mesh offers possibilities with regards to blockchain, event driven and continuous adaptive risk and trust.



Prof. Andreas Reber.

Photo: JT

DRAWBACKS OF THE MODERN TECHNOLOGY

However, an advancement in technology also enhances the importance for cybersecurity. Another key challenge that companies have to consider is the user retention, which in turn, can be solved through continuous engagement and experience. Furthermore, sustainable development always has to be considered due to scarce resources.



Singapore.

Source: Pixabay



www.exploreaman.ch

Finally, looking at the consumer level, one's behaviour, habits and wishes are all easily accessible to organizations, such as Google and Facebook, thus, each individual has to consider how much is relinquished on the Internet.

"Huge possibilities are awaiting us, but everyone should be able to choose, whether to share personal data and how much" (Andreas Reber).

With regards to the ASEAN region, there are huge gaps in the technology advancement between the ten ASEAN countries. Nevertheless, all ASEAN countries have similar challenges, they have to battle, and opportunities, which they should use to their advantage. Advanced technology means that increased education and training is necessary in order to make the highest use of the technical possibilities.

Entrepreneurs also greatly benefit from science, technology and innovation, especially so in Singapore, in which 40% of all ASEAN start-ups can be found. However, the infrastructure, such as electricity and power, in most of the ASEAN region has not yet reached the sophisticated level, which Western countries often take for granted. An improvement in this area is extremely important to increase living standards, which, in turn, is a frequently addressed topic. According to Mr Low, Myanmar and Cambodia will most likely fall behind or even miss out on certain technological development due to their poor infrastructure.

"New technology might widen the gap between countries having advanced infrastructure and those, whose infrastructure is still quite poor" (Tuck Seng Low).



Tuck Seng Low.

Photo: VA



Digital Growth in Southeast Asia.

Source: Hootsuite

Although ASEAN countries having similar and coherent goals, each takes a different path to achieve these, resulting in different pace of development. ●VA

KEY LEARNINGS

SABRINA TENISCH - BUSINESS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



Inspired

Sabrina Tenisch
Photo: JT

I feel inspired by the preparatory seminar and gained a lot of deeper insight in doing business in ASEAN. What I found particularly interesting were the hands-on experiences and stories of the speakers.

LORIS GREYER - BUSINESS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



Network

Loris Grether
Photo: JT

I learnt that a good network is key, build it up carefully, maintain it and you are one step closer to the success.

THREE EXPERTS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

DOING BUSINESS IN ASEAN



www.exploreasean.ch



Delegation exploreASEAN.

Photo: JT

ASEAN is the 4th greatest recipient of foreign direct investments in the world. After the ASEAN region, the second source of these funds originate from Europe, which effectively means, that the European countries are quite present in ASEAN. Consequently, there are opportunities with existing companies which open the door into the ASEAN market.

“As soon as getting off the plane at Jakarta airport, I recognise that this is the place to invest,” claimed Lehmann.

Opportunities are created by the steady increasing internet connectivity and the evolving mobile phone affinity of the people living in ASEAN countries. Moreover, a huge number of young, well educated people who are interested in new things are coming up who will, indeed, offer great opportunities but reveal also some challenges, when entering the ASEAN region. Challenges can appear in terms of cultural, social, political and economic interests. Languages, religions, poverty as well as governmental support and infrastructure can be truly different and thus pose many challenges and risks to start-ups. Altogether there are challenges, which might be as simple as the payment of a business partner, but they need to be recognised in order to survive in the ASEAN market.

Admittedly, there are many challenges when entering a new market. But how do we know the right moment to invest into a country?

Simon Lehmann, the CEO of Bruno Lehmann AG, answered the question as follows: “There are many answers, but one answer you cannot put on a paper is your gut feeling. As soon as you leave the plane you recognise this is the place to invest”. In Indonesia, Mr. Lehmann saw the potential as a small company to build a basis in order to survive in the future and to grow even more. However, when dealing with Asian counterparts, a good partner, many visits and good calculations are essential to start a business successfully. ●JT



Simon Lehmann.

Photo: JT

AN INSPIRATION TO GO - BLASER SWISSLUBE



BlaserBalloons.

Source: www.blaser.com

With an inspiring and motivating speech, Marc Blaser, CEO of Blaser Swisslube, spoke to the participants of all four projects Insight China, Focus India, connectUS and exploreASEAN on Friday about the history of his company, challenges in business and gave valuable recommendations to the students.

Representing Blaser Swisslube, main joint-partner of all four International Student Projects, Mr Blaser introduced the long-standing family business to the audience. With over 600 employees worldwide and having celebrated its 80th birthday only two years ago, there is no need to question the success of Blaser Swisslube.

THE SUCCESS OF BLASER SWISSLUBE

Blaser Swisslube changed the game with its certified coolant Blaser's Liquid Tool which provides greater performance in order to protect machines and tools, prolongs running time and decreases production interruptions. According to Mr Blaser, the product alone was not the game changer, but proving the value of Blaser's Liquid Tool to customers by testing it and showing the quality and performance of the product. As a clarification of the previous explanations, Mr Blaser told a story about his grandfather who went to a farmer in order to present his shoe cream product. Of course, the seller made several promises what his product can do, but the farmer was skeptical. Therefore, the seller offered to polish the farmer's shoes and said that he will return a few weeks later to give the farmer time to test the polish on his shoes and no matter what decision the farmer makes, he still has polished shoes for free. The story remains part of the DNA of Blaser today: First show the benefits of your product and then ensure you get paid its value.

Blaser's competitors and many buyers saw coolant as a commodity product while Blaser position their liquid tool as high-value service.

"People confuse price with cost!"

Often people in the industry asked for lower prices, without taking into account that a better coolant will save costs in the end. Blaser Swisslube has been keen on proving the opposite. As mentioned before, they invested much effort into showing the industry, that under the bottom line, Blaser's Liquid Tool, although having a higher price, still will save production cost. With this move, Blaser managed to turn a product which is sometimes seen as a necessary evil by the industry into a great product, which saves money and is worth investing in.

Concludingly, Mr Blaser gave many valuable tips to the students on how to continue after studies, such as recommending to do something you love in order to get the best out of yourself and that it is vital to bond with people, because it is all about the people.

This inspiring speech has been an enrichment for the Preparatory Seminar and, along with the various years of support, is another highly appreciated contribution to the International Student Projects.

•TR



CEO Marc Blaser.

Photo: NL

DIGITAL HEALTH



Christine K. Jacob.

Photo: MH

Christine is the founder and managing director of the boutique digital strategy agency Digi-Bridges. She focused on what digital health is, how it is being used today and what potential it might have in the future. She called this process of digital health services coming into the healthcare sector as a digital disruption.

The use of VR, for example, can help patients get distracted from chronic pains. Body parts can artificially be printed using a 3D printer and replace damaged limbs or skin.

Digital Health – only a hype? Many experts believe that these new technologies will not remain for long.

Statistics showed us that even though there are a lot of health apps on mobile marketplaces, only 15% of these have more than 5'000 downloads. This led to the conclusion that digital health alone is not effective, but the actions of the users make it effective. Therefore, developers will need to focus on users, when developing effective apps or digital health products. A correct implementation into the existing workflow is necessary.



Christine K. Jacob.

Photo: MH

"Digital health is a social and a behavioural science."

Digital Health goes beyond apps it also includes technology which can either be a contact lens for people with diabetes to check their insulin rate. Also, edible technology which will track the condition of the patient very fast and easily.

Christina Jacob showed an example of a children's hospital where they mainly dealt with cancer. By implementing the use of an app for the children, monitoring their health and reminding them to take pills improved tremendously. 90% of the children documented health information correctly, where before the app only 11% of the children did it correctly.

This shows that the technology saves lives and improves preventive actions. When and to which extend the new technology will play a role in the future will depend on the society of today. ●MH

KEY LEARNING

AMIR DEDIC - BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



Future

Amir Dedic
Photo: MH

Digital health is the future. It will definitely have an impact on the health and pharma business but it will not happen today or tomorrow.



Mario Schmuziger.

Photo: MH

HOW ORGANIZATIONS DISCOVER, SELECT AN EXECUTION INNOVATION

DRIVING INNOVATION

www.connectus.ch

The company “Zühlke” coaches clients from different sectors –from engineering to medical technology until financial companies. Mario Schmuziger, Business Solution Manager Internet of Things at Zühlke, held a refreshing presentation on the topic “Driving innovation – to bring an idea to reality.”

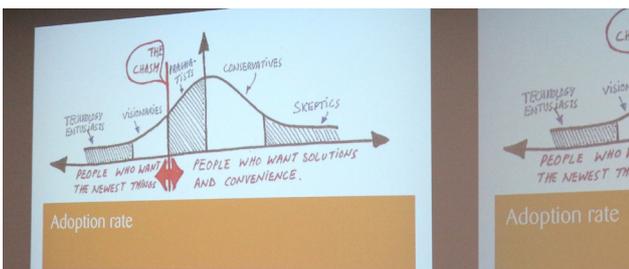
Innovation is defined as the process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value and remains on the market. If something is convenient and trustful, people are willing to pay for it. Innovations are crucial to reach more effectiveness, capture value and to strengthen growth strategies.

The first digital camera was a threat at first because it disrupted the business plan. But it became a huge success and a great innovation! It is all about opportunities and threats. An understanding of the target group is necessary. Prototypes and tests help to improve and refine the new innovation and ask for feedback from your customers. This is how innovation can be developed. Furthermore, you must be ready when unforeseen things happen.

Key points for innovation need to be known as followed: Firstly, get an understanding of the target group, secondly, be as creative as possible, thirdly, create prototypes, fourthly, do testing, fifthly, make further developments and operations as things are changing all the time.

In addition, Schmuziger provided the audience with some take-aways. Mentioning that digitalization comes, no matter if somebody wants it or not. Go with the time and make use of opportunities but also be aware of the risk, that an innovation also can be a flop. Be brave because you cannot go beyond borders without taking the risk of losing.

To conclude, Schmuziger stated that education is the key for keeping up with innovations over the years as a company. Keep people up-to-date in order remain innovative! ●MH



Adaptation rate.

Photo: MH



Mario Schmuziger.

Photo: MH



Fernando Israel Espinosa Olivera and Carlos de Alva Fernandez.

Photo: TR

EXCITEMENT ON BOTH SIDES!

THE VISIT OF THE MEXICAN EMBASSY

www.connectus.ch

On Wednesday of the Preparatory Seminar, connectUS visited the Mexican Embassy in Berne. Both parties were excited, as the Embassy has been visited for the first time by a group of students and connectUS will visit Mexico for the first time during the On-Site Seminar. Interesting topics such as bilateral relations, the Mexican economy as well as politics and influences from changes in the political landscape have been openly discussed with Minister Fernando Israel Espinosa Olivera, chief of the embassy, and Carlos de Alva Fernandez, the head of cultural affairs, throughout the visit.

This year is of high importance to Mexico because of the election, which takes place on the 1st of July, where a third of the senators in the government will change and a new president will be elected. The last comparably big election was in 1992. Mexico is a politically as well as economically stable country having an open market and being the 15th largest economy of the world. Furthermore, Mexico is an internationally high ranked exporter of various goods, as they are the largest exporter of silver, beer, flatscreens and avocados.

Being one of the destinations of connectUS, Guadalajara is the most important technology hotspot of Mexico and set to become the next "Silicon Valley", due to many new start-ups and a recognizable switch to the technology sector. This underlines the decision of expanding the On-Site Seminar from the United States to Mexico and therefore to literally go across boundaries.

Concludingly, the influence of changes in the political landscape of the United States on Mexico have been discussed in an open Q&A session. The visit has been outstanding throughout the whole time and the efforts of explaining the topics transparently was highly appreciated by every single participant. •TR



Carlos de Alva Fernandez.

Photo: TR

The history of bilateral relations between Switzerland and Mexico goes way back to the year 1945, when diplomatic relations between Mexico and Switzerland began. The current topic between the two countries right now is the unique Swiss dual education program, in which Mexico is very interested in. Swiss companies in Mexico already have implemented the Swiss dual system.

KEY LEARNING

MARC SCHÄR - BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



Marc Schär
Photo: MH

For the future Minister Espinosa expects that Mexico can become the 8th largest economy by 2050. This is larger than the UK and Russia, which is amazing!

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