

# RE SPON SIBI LITY DAY

Responsibility Day, which was originally called Ethics Day was launched in 2009 on behalf of the CBS' Dean of Education. It is held annually and is the first official day of university for all new bachelor students at CBS. During the morning session, a case company presents a current dilemma that touches upon **sustainability, ethical, responsibility** or such like issues. Each year we select a new case organization and theme. Responsibility Day has grown dramatically since its inception in 2009 from around 450 students at Solbjerg Plads to around 2600 in 2019.

The **prizes** awarded have also varied greatly through the years but the last few years has seen a movement to sustainable products and education-promotion. 2019's winners received not only Academic Book vouchers and a goody basket of sustainable gifts but also the opportunity to take part in the **18th ABIS Annual Colloquium on Business in Society: Measuring Impact and Creating Change 29-30 October, 2019 in Berlin.**

In a further effort to understand Carbon footprint and to promote sustainability, PRME required the winners to abandon flights in favour of train travel to the conference. The prizes of the case competition were sponsored by **QVARTZ management consulting.**

The case company for Responsibility Day, 2019 was **Grundfos**, the Danish pump producers. The case concerned the employee initiative to bring clean water to developing economies through their **Water2Life** programme. The winning team consisted of Katherine Nguyen, Janna Birr-Pedersen and Karoline Egede Nylander who wrote an article on winning the competition for Responsibility Day that we are now pleased to share with you.

BY JANNA BIRR-PEDERSEN, KAROLINE EGEDE NYLANDER  
AND KATHRINE NGUYE

## FROM RESPONSIBILITY DAY CASE COMPETITION TO ABIS CONFERENCE IN BERLIN

Excited and nervous we entered KB Hallen to attend Responsibility Day 2019. This was our first day at Copenhagen Business School (CBS), as for the almost 3.000 other students attending the event. The day involved panel discussions from top leaders from Danish firms, students at CBS and H.R.H. crown princess Mary.

The topic of the day was how to be responsible which was nice because it showed how sustainability and acting responsible is important for CBS as a school. It was an exciting way to start a new chapter of our lives and even more exciting to hear about case solving. Together we had the opportunity to start off our years at CBS by solving a case for the company Grundfos. In the case, we had to solve a problem for Grundfos' employee initiative Water2Life on how to act responsibly.

We had only known each other for less than two weeks, and we were now about to solve a case together. It is always challenging to solve cases in teams, but maybe even more challenging when you do not know the people you are working with. However, it turned out the three of us worked great together and we had such a good time trying to come up with solutions for the case question. We were trying to figure out how Water2Life could choose countries where they should implement their project. We found each of our strengths and were good at making each other better in the process. The whole process

was a great learning experience: Listening to each other's ideas, writing together... and before we knew it, presenting together.

When we got the news that we were amongst the finalists to present our case in front of judges and an audience, it was both thrilling and nerve-racking. We prepared for the final presentation and built up courage to present our solution. The two other finalists had both chosen to solve a different dilemma that came with the Water2Life case. Their solutions were well thought through and both groups did a splendid job presenting it. As the final group to do our presentation, it was very intimidating to follow the high standard. We decided just to enjoy the moment, so we got on stage and did our best to present the solution. After the presentation, the judges got together to review the contestants while we went to the student bar, Nexus to talk with friends from our class and other students. It was a great honor, when the judges announced we were the winners of Responsibility Day Case Competition 2019. Besides a valuable learning experience, we also won a trophy and a basket full of gifts.

Amongst the gifts, we won a trip to Berlin to attend the 18th ABIS Annual Colloquium Conference. Part of Responsibility Day is to put focus on sustainability and ethical choices for businesses, but also for us as individuals. PRME is very passionate about limiting the



amount of carbon emitted due to transportation, so employees have to travel by train whenever the trip can be made in under ten hours. The same rule goes for case competition winners, and a trip to Berlin takes approximately eight hours by train. At first, we were very sceptical about this means of transportation, as the trip would only take under two hours by airplane. However, we had so much fun! Our time onboard the train was spend on card games and microeconomics exercises. We also got to talk with one of our fellow passengers. He shared with us how he hadn't owned a car in 30 years and always took the train from Sweden to Germany when commuting between the two - which he did often. The whole train ride turned out to be a great bonding experience, since we had only known each other for about two months at this point. This was especially the case at Hamburg central station, where we really got to see how we each deal with a stressful situation. We were mistakenly informed not to enter a train, that afterwards turned out to be ours. Luckily enough, we only had to wait a short period of time before we found another train passing through Berlin.

In Berlin we participated in a two-day conference where we attended multiple presentations and interactive sessions. The goal of the conference was to put focus on the importance of measuring impacts, the challenges that academia and businesses are facing to maximize their impact. Furthermore, the conference gave us the possibility to engage in discussions to share best practices that create positive change for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Conference was a great opportunity for us to network which was also a large part of the agenda. We got to talk to professors from all over the world - both developing- and developed countries. One thing that all three of us found especially interesting was the subsession: New approaches to sustainable value creation. During this subsession we had an overview of 5 ongoing research papers. Especially catching our attention was Lisa Gring-Pempe's, George Mason University, presentation of their Honey Bee Initiative (HBI). Lisa explained how HBI is a global initiative which educates students and offers hands-on experience with entrepreneurship. At one of the networking sessions, we were fortunate enough to talk to Lisa and hear more about her inspiring story.

We didn't quite know what to expect from the conference since all three of us were first time attendees to a conference, but looking back at the conference we found it to be very educational. We got a larger insight into the process that businesses go through working on their strategy concerning sustainability and how academia are still debating a standardised way to measure its impact. We were happy to win this trip to Berlin as part of our prize for winning Responsibility Day. As new students, we got to expand our network internationally, and we learnt about the ways of working for the academic world. Furthermore, we learnt a great deal about both academia and the business world in their search for the best way to be responsible. It is reassuring to experience that sustainability and responsibility in businesses is taken seriously amongst relevant people in both worlds!

