

---

## Editorial

---

### Fernando A.F. Ferreira

ISCTE Business School,  
University Institute of Lisbon,  
Avenida das Forças Armadas,  
1649-026 Lisbon, Portugal

and

Fogelman College of Business and Economics,  
University of Memphis,  
Memphis, TN 38152-3120, USA  
E-mail: fernando.alberto.ferreira@iscte.pt  
E-mail: fernando.ferreira@memphis.edu

### Carla S.E. Marques

Department of Economics, Sociology and Management,  
University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,  
Quinta dos Prados, Complexo Pedagógico,  
Apartado 2013, 5001-801 Vila Real, Portugal  
E-mail: smarques@utad.pt

### Marjan S. Jalali

ISCTE Business School,  
University Institute of Lisbon,  
Avenida das Forças Armadas,  
1649-026 Lisbon, Portugal  
E-mail: marjan.jalali@iscte.pt

**Biographical notes:** Fernando A.F. Ferreira is an Assistant Professor at the ISCTE Business School of the University Institute of Lisbon, and Adjunct Research Professor at the University of Memphis, TN, USA. He holds a PhD in Quantitative Methods Applied to Economics and Management from the University of Algarve, Portugal. In 2009, he was granted with a Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation fellowship for Post-doctoral studies at the Fogelman College of Business and Economics of the University of Memphis. He has published some of his research in international journals such as *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* and *International Journal of Strategic Property Management*. He has practical experience as group facilitator and his main research interests include multiple criteria decision analysis and integrated systems for performance measurement.

Carla S.E. Marques is an Assistant Professor of Management at the Department of Economics, Sociology and Management, University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD), Vila Real, Portugal. In her PhD in Management Science

(UTAD), she evaluated Portuguese industrial firms' innovation strategies. She is the Coordinator of the 'Innovation, Markets and Organization' research group at UTAD's Centre for Transdisciplinary Development Studies (CETRAD). Her research on innovation and entrepreneurship has been presented at numerous international conferences and published in international journals such as *Service Business*, *Journal of Business Research*, *International Journal of Management and Enterprise Development*, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* and *Management Research*. Her research interests include innovation, management of change and entrepreneurship.

Marjan S. Jalali is an Assistant Professor at the ISCTE Business School of the University Institute of Lisbon, and researcher at the Business Research Center (BRU-IUL), Portugal. She holds a PhD in Management from the University of Sydney, Australia. She is editorial board member of the *Global Business and Economics Review*, managing editor of the *International Journal of Management Science and Information Technology*, and some of her works have been published nationally and internationally. Her research interests include multiple criteria decision analysis, strategic decision-making and consumer behaviour.

---

The world has changed dramatically in the last five years. Since the Global Financial Crisis and the various national recessions and even sovereignty debt crises that have followed it, uncertainty has greatly increased: for individuals, families, national governments and, of course, for the firms that make up each country's business fabric and which must now learn to navigate this new and changing context and their impact on the various actors mentioned above.

The *International Journal of Learning and Change* has always acknowledged that "change is inevitable and needs to be managed wherever possible". Recent events have simply made the changes more rapid and the challenge of managing them bigger. Learning therefore assumes special importance in this context and with it technology and innovation. The requirement is a posture of learning that as per the journal's own description, will allow "reforming and revitalising organisational capability, knowledge and intellectual assets". Such was the context in which we put out the appeal for this special issue – we wanted to understand the changes occurring and the inter-relations between them; their impact on business processes, learning and performance; and how innovation could be a means of adapting to and overcoming the challenges posed by the new environment.

The contributions we received could not have been more diverse. Whereas initially surprising, it quickly became clear to us that this was an indication of the far reaching effects of the ongoing changes in the global economy; as well as of the comprehensive impact of learning and technology in dealing with them. We decided that the final selection of papers had to reflect this diversity and, in the end, feel the issue is richer for it.

Although the papers may appear to (and indeed do) deal with many different specific issues and national contexts, the underlying theme is precisely the role of learning and technology in helping survive, adapt to or even take advantage of this new more turbulent business context.

The issue starts in Portugal, with the paper entitled ‘Design management, learning and innovation: results from a Portuguese online questionnaire’ by José M. Monteiro Barata. This four year study into hitherto unexplored territory in Portugal provides many an insight, since design has long been recognised as one of the most relevant ‘non-price’ factors in business performance. The findings will no doubt be of great use to the Portuguese manufacturing industry, but are likely to be applicable beyond the country’s borders as well; in particular, given the perceptions provided of the links between design use/innovation and cultural dimensions and prospection of external support.

The issue then moves to matters of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), through two very different papers, but which together highlight the prominence of ethics and CSR across the board in dealing with the outcomes of recent economic changes, and insuring against future problems of the same nature. The paper entitled ‘How is corporate social responsibility addressed by biotech firms? A case study analysis’, by Guillermo Pérez-Bustamante, explores the issue of CSR in the biotech sector, looking not only at why and how these companies engage in such activities, but how CSR can ultimately add value to them. With the paper entitled ‘Designing for multiple stakeholder interests within the humanitarian market: the case of off-grid energy devices’, by Brita Fladvad Nielsen and Ana Laura Rodrigues Santos, we remain on the topics of design and technology, but now applied to the humanitarian market, within which a market for renewable energy technologies has emerged. This new market, resulting from the various pools of displaced population currently living in different parts of the world, requires the involvement and collaboration of many different stakeholders, in order for the needs of these populations to be understood, and the best, most cost-efficient and sustainable ways of meeting them to be found. The authors delve into these issues through a series of in depth interviews with relevant stakeholders.

From displaced populations to economic and political issues in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), our fourth paper is entitled ‘Meeting the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’s (SCO) challenges: What role can technology play?’, by Stephen Grainger, and looks in detail at this cooperative body of countries, and the challenges presented to it with regard to cohesion, enlargement, external relations, resource development and economic cooperation among others. For each of these challenges, the author provides proposed alternatives and solutions, taking into account the fundamental role of technology, innovation and learning in moving forward.

Finally, back to Europe, and at amore micro level, the fifth contribution is entitled ‘Styling and design in multi-segmented market strategies: the case of the Italian knitwear sector’, by Maria Rosaria Marcone, and analyses the Italian knitwork sector. Apparently very different, the underlying themes are the same – major changes have occurred and these companies need to adjust. Technology needs play a role, and Marcone analyses how it does so according to the firms’ positioning and chain of production.

We are grateful to the editor for this opportunity, and we hope that you will appreciate the variety of papers presented in this special edition of the *International Journal of Learning and Change*.