

RUTGERS INSTITUTE FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL INNOVATION

## SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

AY 2023-2024



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## Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation



### Grateful, Proud, and Excited!

A Personal Message from Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D., Executive Director, Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI)

As I reflect on my first year as RICSI's Executive Director, I couldn't be more grateful and proud for how far we have come, or more excited about the foundation we have set for our future. I am deeply grateful to our 'small but mighty team,' extraordinary founder Gary M. Cohen, brilliant and inspiring strategic advisors, and generous collaborators for putting your trust in us.

I am grateful to our Corporate Partners and donors for giving us the opportunity to make a difference, and to our students who inspire me every day with their optimism and vision.

In this document, our first RICSI "Social Impact Report," we hope you will be inspired by our many exciting initiatives and join us as we continue to grow our impact on business and society. You will see examples of how, together, we breathe life into RICSI's Purpose: To develop the next generation of Corporate Social Innovation leaders and become a leading academic partner in addressing society's most pressing issues.

You will see innovative ways we have applied our unique <u>four-pillar model</u> to educate, collaborate and inspire the full spectrum of stakeholders as we support organizations on their CSI journeys. In all that we do, we focus on three interrelated outcomes: <u>Climate Justice</u>, <u>Health Equity</u>, <u>and Shared Prosperity</u>.

Throughout this report, we document myriad examples of how we generate meaningful change affecting these outcomes. Going forward, we are excited to announce our new *Corporate Social Innovation Excellence Awards*, culminating in a Fundraising and Awards Gala to be held on May 1, 2025. Stay tuned for more information.

We look forward to working more closely with you on the next leg of the Corporate Social Innovation journey.

Sincerely, Jeana Wirtenberg Jeana Wirtenberg

## In this Report you can expect:

OUR PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

COLLABORATING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

HEALTH EQUITY
COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE

INSPIRE TRAINING PROGRAM

DISTINGUISHED EXECUTIVES IN RESIDENCE

STRATEGIC ADVISORS

**IMPACTING STUDENTS** 

**GALA NIGHT SPOTLIGHT** 



# Rutgers and FSG Collaborate to Advance Health Equity





### by Erin Byrne

In an effort to address health disparities, the Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI) partnered with FSG, a global social impact consulting firm, to host a pivotal meeting on health equity. This collaborative event brought together corporate practitioners, thought leaders, and industry experts to explore innovative corporate strategies and solutions aimed at creating a more equitable healthcare future.

The meeting, which took place at the Rutgers New Brunswick campus in September 2023, was a passionate exchange of ideas and perspectives. Participants engaged in deep discussions about the systemic barriers contributing to health inequities and the urgent need for action. The event underscored the importance of multi-sector collaboration in addressing complex social issues.

Central to this effort was the integration of insights from FSG"s <u>Purpose Studio.</u> The Purpose Studio framework helps organizations navigate "interference"—the obstacles and distractions that can hinder progress toward achieving their desired social impact.

The event also included breakout sessions that explored specific areas such as racial disparities in healthcare, access to mental health services, and social determinants of health. By addressing various aspects of "interference" and recognizing the need for particular "enabling conditions", participants focused on practical strategies that could be implemented effectively within organizations to advance health equity across the corporate enterprise.

FSG's insights and frameworks helped participants navigate the challenging dynamics of health equity work. The collaboration with Rutgers not only amplified the impact of the meeting but also highlighted the potential of academic and consulting partnerships in driving social change.

For more information click here.



## **Collaborating for Social Impact**



Tapping Brand Potential for Social Good /ANA Conference by Dan Grimm

At a time when our news cycles are dominated by stories about climate change, social justice, health equity and a wide range of other topics, the need for business to deliver social impact is greater than ever.

In December the Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI) partnered with the **ANA/Center for Brand Purpose** in hosting a one-day event on the Rutgers campus to showcase the ways successful companies are making a difference through the practice of corporate social innovation.

"We asked ourselves, 'What if we put together a variety of topics, a variety of formats, and a variety of presenters...from corporate leaders to students, agencies to authors to educators?', commented Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D. and RICSI Executive Director. "It was a great way to showcase the four pillars of Corporate Social Innovation. and do so in a compelling way."

The program was opened by RBS Dean Lei Lei, who reinforced her commitment to the work RICSI is doing. "We strongly believe that academia and business play a key role in addressing complex social issues," she said. In Dr. Wirtenberg's remarks she described how the intentional integration of business practices within a corporation is what unlocks the power of CSI.

Key presentations included:

- Aligning Purpose and Profit (Karie Ford from Lycra)
- Giving Back to Society (Carolina Souza from Prudential Financial)
- Responsible Business Practices (Bhushan Sethi from PwC)
- Advocating for Social Issues (Dupé Ajayi from Airbnb)

The presentations were punctuated by "lightning talks" delivered by Rutgers students, providing a brief, unique perspective through a student lens. Well-regarded author Anne Bahr Thompson ("Do Good") made summary remarks on the power of purpose and integration. "It was really well structured and informative," noted one attendee about the event.

Another commented that the program was "innovative and thought provoking. Not only did I learn something, but I left feeling inspired." Ken Beaulieu, Executive Vice President at ANA/Center for Brand Purpose, noted "for a one-day event this was the strongest panel of presenters we've had in years." And as one attendee put it, "Everyone should have been required to attend this conference!"

We look forward to convening more programs in the future!



#### RICSI Conference Addresses Issue of Food Access in NJ Communities

More than 100 people attended a conference on sustainable living empowerment hosted by the **Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social**Innovation and **Newark Science and**Sustainability, Inc. The conference, which was held on June 20, 2024, featured a series of discussions on such timely topics as "Creating Better Health and Wellness for our Communities and our Environment" and "Sustainability through the Lens of Community and Economic Development."

During the roundtable discussions, groups of experts spoke about the obstacles and opportunities related to a variety of issues, including preparing for an equitable green economy and creating pathways to green jobs, and integrating sustainable agriculture with green technology and ecological infrastructure to address social, environmental and economic issues.

The conference was funded by a **grant from the Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health or REACH.** RICSI was awarded the grant for its proposal to help address the social determinants of health with an emphasis on food access and food security in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Newark.

Click here to read the blog article on Innovative Solutions to Fight Hunger in NJ, written by graduate student Elena Shlychkov, MSDM/RBS





click on the images above or link to the video below to learn more

Video on Sustainable Living Empowerment Conference, 2024



## Mental Health at Work Community of Practice John J. Sarno, Esq, Distinguished Executive in Residence

1.3 million people (about the entire population of New Hampshire) living in New Jersey have a diagnosable mental illness, including substance abuse disorders. Many of them are workers.

Tragically, only one third of workers receive mental health care and most individuals with a substance use disorder receive no treatment at all.

This extremely high percentage of mental health challenges faced by workers has been exacerbated by the collective trauma from public health emergencies, climate disruptions, political strife, and increasing workplace stress and burnout.

Strong research demonstrates that mental demands on the job, lack of rewards for good work done, infrequent breaks, poor job design, heavy workloads, and long work hours are increasing work stress and burnout, which is now classified as a predicate to occupational illness by the World Health Organization.

In addition to impacting engagement and productivity, mental health issues impact creative efforts and ability to make decisions and solve problems on the job. Business and industry have acknowledged the challenge. According to McKinsey, a majority of employers and employees report there is workplace stigma for mental illness and substance use disorder at their workplace, posing significant barriers to treatment and support.

It is with this in mind that RICSI has initiated the Mental Health at Work Community of Practice, which seeks to:

- raise awareness about mental health at work
- provide best practices information to employers and employees
- encourage the development of employee support programs
- evaluate the impact of programs
- prepare reports and convene meetings
- recommend workplace mental health policies and legislation

For more about the Mental Health at Work Community of Practice or to join, <u>click here</u>.

Thank you for reading!



## RICSI Launches Inspire Training Program After J&J Success

by Erin Byrne

The Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI) continues to exemplify thought leadership, advancing corporate social innovation and responsibility across industries. In a recent collaboration with Johnson & Johnson (J&J), RICSI played a pivotal role in supporting J&J's commitment to ethical business practices through a series of targeted webinars and trainings.

These virtual events, taught by Rutgers academic thought leaders in partnership with J&J experts, addressed critical Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) topics, directly aligning with J&J 's "Responsible Standards for Suppliers."

Over the course of five webinars, hundreds of J&J's direct suppliers were educated on these essential principles, with the training reaching over 700 suppliers globally.

This initiative not only bolstered J&J's supply chain integrity but also underscored the vital importance of corporate responsibility in today's business landscape.

Building on the success of this collaboration, RICSI is proud to introduce its newest offering: the **Inspire Training program**. This program is designed to equip corporations with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the most pressing social impact challenges of our time.

The Inspire Training program brings together world-class academic experts from Rutgers University to deliver tailored content that meets the specific needs of companies and their stakeholders.

Whether you are looking to educate all employees, specific functional teams, or engage cross-functional and geographic teams, RICSI's Inspire Training program offers flexible delivery formats that are customized to your organization's unique needs.

Our programs focus on emerging regulations, evolving responsible business practices, and leadership on critical social issues, ensuring your organization stays ahead of the curve.

By partnering with RICSI, companies can leverage our deep expertise and proven methodologies to foster a culture of innovation and responsibility, demonstrating true leadership in corporate social impact.

For more information about how the Inspire Training program can benefit your organization, please contact us and see our **flyer**.

Thank you for reading!

## RICSI Distinguished Executives in Residence





## Erin Byrne

With an extensive background as a senior leader in Corporate America, Erin has worked at Fortune 200 companies such as Novo Nordisk and Johnson & Johnson where she led transformative changes in how sustainability and social impact were embraced, advanced, and embedded across the company.

She is also an adjunct professor at Rider University and has her own consulting firm focused on sustainability and social impact. She has a Master's in Public Health and a Certificate in Corporate Sustainability from New York University, and an undergraduate degree from Rutgers University.



### Dan Grimm

Dan Grimm is advising on strategic communications and branding. He spent three decades at BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), where he retired as WW Vice President of Brand and Marketing Communications. At BD, Dan led initiatives on brand purpose, customer centricity, and brand activation, and has lectured on these topics.

Before BD, he spent eight years in a creative agency. Dan holds a Master's in Advertising and a Bachelor's in Broadcasting from Southern Illinois University.



### John J. Sarno

John J. Sarno, Esq. is counsel at Robinson Miller, LLC in Newark where he consults on all aspects of federal and state court litigation and advises business and nonprofit leaders on complex and confidential management issues.

Formerly president of the Employers Association of New Jersey, John, with an expert staff, provided executive and strategic HR leadership to over one thousand employers.

Long an engaged citizen and ardent volunteer, the New Jersey Senate and Assembly passed a Joint Resolution in 2023 honoring John's exemplary leadership and contributions to the public good.

## RICSI Strategic Advisors





#### Ken Gustavsen - Executive Director, Social Business Innovation, Merck

Ken Gustavsen is Executive Director, Social Business Innovation at Merck (known as MSD outside the United States and Canada), where he manages the company's Impact Venture Fund and coordinates the Social Business Innovation global engagement team. He has been at Merck since 2000 in a variety of roles, with a focus on innovative approaches to expanding access to healthcare in the developing world and emerging markets. Before joining Merck, Ken led a post-war relief and development program in Kosovo for the non-profit organization World Relief, involving microfinance banking and housing reconstruction. Prior to World Relief, Ken served for 6 years in the United States Navy in a variety of assignments.

Ken received a BS in oceanography from the United States Naval Academy, holds an MBA in finance and global business from Rutgers University, and completed the Advanced Finance Program at the Wharton School. For more click here...



#### Beth Hurvitz - Global Business and Social Impact Executive

Board Member, Financial Services and Payments, Fintech, ESG, Digital Transformation

A former COO of North America and Global Head of Social Impact for Visa, Beth Hurvitz brings C-suite level experience in delivering growth, impact, and scale to public, private and nonprofit organizations. Combining strategy and operations expertise with disruptive thinking, Beth built a consistent track record of delivering critical business results, efficient operations, and global partnerships for sustained revenue growth across several complex global organizations. An early trailblazer as a lone female engineer at IBM, Beth is best known for imagining what is possible, no matter how complex or challenging the opportunity, and then delivering on that vision with excellence.

Beth has been recognized for bringing order to chaos – and combining the commercial and societal lens to deliver resilient, sustainable, and inclusive growth. Beth earned her Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Harvard Business School and her Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering (BSEE) from Tufts University. For more click here ....



#### Larry Ruff -Former President of Fair Trade USA

Larry Ruff has 40+ years' experience working with major US and global brands, small, medium, and large for-profit corporations, and a variety of nonprofits. A passionate advocate for social justice, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and health and wellness, Larry is a mission-driven leader focused on building & supporting purpose-driven organizations, leveraging business as a platform for growth and good, and delivering meaningful social, environmental, and economic impact.

Larry is currently a Director and has served on the Fair Trade USA (FTUSA) Board of Directors since 2014. Larry also served as FTUSA's President & Chief Operating Officer from April 2020 – November 2023. He worked for Levi Strauss & Company for over 25 years holding a variety of leadership positions and held a number of positions in brand management with The Procter & Gamble Company. Larry served as a member of Cornell University's Leadership Council on Combating Racism and Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging from September 2020 - December 2023, and joined the RICSI Board of Strategic Advisors in September 2023. For more click here...



#### Govi Rao- CEO, Phase Change Solutions

Govi Rao is a visionary thought leader and seasoned business growth architect with more than 25 years of leadership experience globally - scaling businesses and transforming eco-systems across such industries as specialty chemicals, coatings, building materials, lighting, energy and the rapidly evolving Fourth Industrial Revolution. In his current role, Govi leads a team of highly innovative and inspiring leaders, with a vision to decarbonize our footprint and enable human health with sustainable solutions to manage temperature in any environment.

Govi is a co-founder of CARBON Group Global - a sustainable impact enterprise scaling transformational solutions to address education, total resiliency of women and resource efficiency. He was instrumental in establishing Lighting Science as an innovative pace setter in the emerging LED lighting space. Widely traveled across Asia, Europe and the Americas, Govi has a keen sense of value creation in emerging markets and technologies, grounded on the principles of sustainability. For more click here...



# Engaging and Empowering Students through the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (UN PRME) By Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D.

The <u>Principles for Responsible Management</u> <u>Education (PRME)</u> is a United Nations initiative to embed sustainability in business and management education through Seven Principles focused on serving society and taking care of our planet. The Seven Principles were developed in 2007 by an international task force of deans, university presidents and representatives of leading business schools and academic institutions.

Over 800 business and management schools in 96 countries currently comprise the PRME community, representing the largest organized relationship between the United Nations and management-related higher education institutions. PRME works closely with the <u>UN Global Compact</u> to have business schools collaborate with businesses and create positive social impact.

With the support of RICSI and Dean Lei, Rutgers Business School signed onto UN PRME in November 2017 pursuant to a "RU Sustainable" Rutgers University-wide event designed and cosponsored by RICSI and attended by more than 200 students, faculty, and staff members.

The event focused on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how Rutgers could contribute to making them a reality in four key areas called CORE: Curriculum, Operations, Research, and Engagement. We realized that successful implementation of the SDGs requires all hands-on deck and the role of higher education is absolutely critical.

Since that time, RICSI has led the development of three biennial "Sharing Information on Progress" (SIP) Reports in 2019, 2021, and most recently published our 2022-2023 report in February 2024.

From its inception, our RBS approach has focused on building a PRME community that is voluntary, self-organizing, organic, and emergent, going where the energy is greatest and building on the momentum that unfolds.

Going forward, our intention is to expand our impact by further connecting to student clubs and actions on the ground. We are working to accelerate and measure our impact and engage more students as pivotal stakeholders in preparing for their future roles as decision-makers and leaders.

Read our latest report here...





# Preparing the Next Generation of Corporate Social Innovation Leaders By Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D.

As an ever-increasing number of businesses step up to address the great challenges of our time, significant opportunities for social innovation are rising to the fore. More and more businesses are discovering new ways to thrive and prosper, at the same time as they address some of the world's most intractable social and ecological problems.

The ability to innovate is now seen as a key driver of business success and is an essential capacity for companies to sustain their competitive advantage. And many leading corporations are beginning to bring social innovation into the heart of their economic, social and environmental strategic priorities, plans, and goals.

In this context, RICSI developed and implemented a three-credit MBA course called "Introduction to Corporate Social Innovation." Through this course, we help prepare the leaders of tomorrow to create profitable and sustainable business opportunities in a business world undergoing massive and transformational change.

The course provides a foundation to prepare the next generation of business leaders to integrate social innovation, sustainability, and shared value creation into the core of the operations, culture, and ventures of their firms. The course addresses both the challenges and the opportunities of CSI, while focusing on the private sector's current and future roles in addressing these challenges in innovative ways. It culminates in a team project at a focal company to design and develop a business opportunity for CSI in the context of one or more of these challenges.

Using case studies, guest speakers, group projects, and course readings, students gain a broad understanding of the many ways they can pursue positive, innovative and sustainable change in a business environment.

Students develop the skills, knowledge, and practices for building innovative organizations that contribute to solving complex social, ecological, and economic problems.

Continued ...



### **Preparing the Next Generation of**

### Corporate Social Innovation Leaders, By Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D.

#### continued

Course modules include:

☐ The business case: how can we create shared value

☐ Financing CSI: investing in society

☐ Accounting for CSI: formally measuring and reporting progress

☐ Greening the Supply Chain: building responsible B2B relationships

☐ Marketing CSI: communicating and branding

☐ Global Perspectives: CSI around the world

☐ Developing & Selling CSI initiatives: innovation and intrapreneurship

☐ Collaborating across sectors to create a healthier world

☐ Managing responsible organizations: leadership for a better world

The course has run five times since it was introduced in 2019 and is an elective for both the Strategy and Leadership tracks of RBS Strategy and Leadership concentrations.

Guest speakers have come from BD, Novo Nordisk, Merck, Visa, Prudential, RWJ Foundation, J&J, Phase Change Solutions, Panasonic, Samsung, Transitioning to Green, RBS Supply Chain Department, et al. Speakers are currently being lined up for the fall 2024 class and will include Sustainability VP at Milliken & Company, among others.

The course has consistently received rave reviews from students. Here are a few sample testimonials from MBA students who have taken the course:

[I liked] "Learning real-world perspectives from phenomenal guest speakers at the top of their field and an opportunity to learn from them and ask questions in an intimate setting as well as an informal way of networking with them."

"This course has opened my horizons to new opportunities, knowledge and perspective. There is a whole new dimension of what businesses are capable of doing that I was not aware of and it is truly inspirational. This course was like a key to a whole new world of opportunities for me."

For more information on our CSI courses and Rutgers Stackable Business Innovation (rSBI)

#### Certificate Programs click here.



## RICSI Website Development By Dan Grimm

During the past year our **RICSI website** has continued to be refined and populated with more useful information! At the site visitors can learn more about our **methodology**, as well as find presentations, articles, podcasts, and blogs related to CSI.

Our well-attended research series QUASI ("Questions and Unanswers About Social Innovation") is featured on the page titled <u>"Our Research"</u>, as well as special issues of Rutgers Business Review that feature our work.

On the "Our Teaching" page students can learn how to enroll in our classes and certificate programs. Visitors can read about many of our past events on the "Our Outreach" page, and also find an extensive compilation of bespoke content related to the topic of Health Equity.

Our <u>"Smart Ideas"</u> page contains blogs and opinion pieces written by RICSI staff with the intent of inspiring and engaging readers. It is also the place visitors can listen to our "Impact Reimagined" podcast series featuring notable guests such as Abigail Disney, Paul Polman and Lord Michael Hastings.

We encourage everyone to visit, or visit again, soon!



# Social Venture Challenge in partnership with Resolution Project By Deborah Flamengo

We believe that Social Entrepreneurship can begin at any time, and sometimes students have ideas for socially responsible ventures but may not always know where or how to start. Together with the **Resolution Project**, we hosted our two-day **inaugural Social Venture**Challenge in April.

This opportunity allowed for undergraduate students to pitch their social innovation or community solution for a chance to receive a lifelong Fellowship, seed funding, dedicated mentorship, and access to a wide network of people and resources to help navigate the challenges of social entrepreneurship.

Judges included two RICSI Strategic Advisors, Ken Gustavsen, Executive Director, Social Business Innovation at Merck and Govi Rao, CEO of Phase Change Solutions, plus five Ernst and Young (EY) leaders and a senior leader from the Resolution Project. All seed funding was provided by EY.

This opportunity resulted in two winning teams, both from Rutgers Business School – Newark and New Brunswick. Each team was awarded the maximum seed funding of \$5,000 to begin their social ventures.

The first social venture, Le Hibou A La Mode, presented by graduating senior Desiree Celestin, focused on providing low-income high school girls with gowns and accessories so they could attend prom and, down the line, allowing them to dress for success.

The second venture, Synergy, presented by Chinonso Anyanwu, Goodness Ifesanya, and David Kema, focused on creating an app for professional and mental support that would be powered by the Community and backed by Al.

The experience was inspiring for all involved and we are looking forward to hosting another Social Venture Challenge in Spring 2025!



## **Future Plans and Milestones**

## **Sponsor Outreach**

RICSI is actively seeking to secure sponsor(s) for our "Mental Health at Work" Community of Practice. We are reaching out to current and potential Corporate Partners for our Inspire Training, sponsorships for our Awards Gala and related upcoming events.

Rutgers Health Service Corps Extreme Heat & Mental Health Launch, September 2024. Alumni Event, Leadership and Careers in CSI/CSR/ESG in the new era, TBA Fall 2024.

Resolution Project, Social Venture Challenge, Spring 2025. Corporate Social Innovation Excellence Awards, Fundraising and Awards Gala, May 1, 2025.



# Special Thanks, Announcements, and Contact Information



### SPECIAL THANKS

Many thanks to our Corporate Partners, Collaborators, Funders, and Donors for enabling us to create high impact inspiring and highly educational conferences, events, programs, and more. We are deeply grateful to our Strategic Advisors and Distinguished Executives in Residence for generously sharing their insights across various aspects of our corporate social innovation programs and outreach.

**Special thanks** to <u>Elena Shlychkov</u>, a Master's student in Digital Marketing at Rutgers Business School, for her exceptional work in the graphic design and editing of the 15-page template for our current Social Impact Report, 2023-2024. She oversaw the RICSI team's efforts in content development, created and placed customized images, banners and flyers, and ensured the entire Report was optimized for SEO.

#### **CONTACT US**

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### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Corporate Social Innovation Excellence Awards

Fundraising & Awards Gala

May 1, 2025, 5-9 PM Rutgers Club, Piscataway, N.J.

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