



The Virtual Evolution

Helping You Move Beyond The Confines Of 'The Cave'

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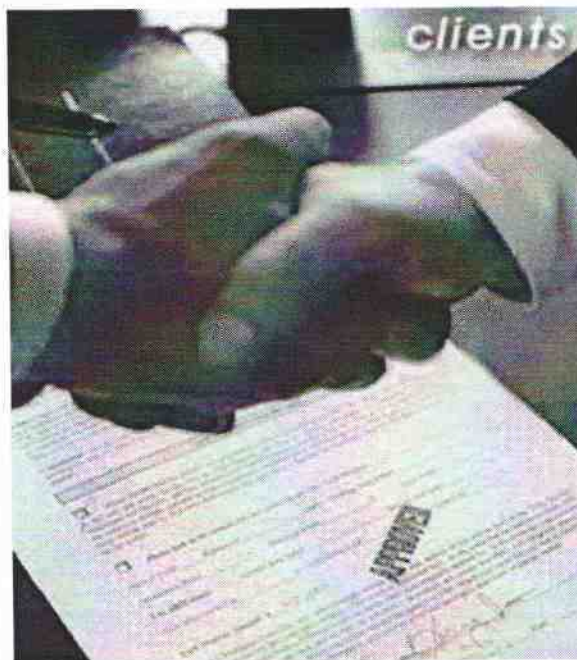


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Interview With An Educator: Professor Mirjana Radović-Marković, Ph.D.

By: Lily Chambers



TVE Magazine had the opportunity to ask some questions of Dr. Mirjana Radović-Marković of Akamai University, Hawaii. The following is the first half of the interview we received. Part two will be published in the next issue of TVE Magazine.

Dr. Mirjana Radović-Marković is a full professor of Entrepreneurship. She holds B.Sc, M.Sc. and Ph.D. Degrees in Economics, as well as Post Doctoral Studies in Multidisciplinary Studies. In addition, she holds the Honorary Doctorate of Science (D.Sc) awarded by St. James the Elder Theological Seminary, Tennessee, US, 2010 and the Honorary Doctorate of Letters (D.Litt) awarded by the Academy of Universal Global Peace, Chennai, India, 2010. The awarding committees cited Dr. Radović-Marković for having served the world community with outstanding research in Economics and Women's Entrepreneurship. She has written twenty books and more than a hundred peer Journal Articles. Professor Radović-Marković's new book is WOMEN IN BUSINESS: Theory, Practice and Flexible Approaches, published by Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2009, London, UK. Professor Radović-Marković is a founder and editor in chief of Peer Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education (JWE) and editor in chief of Economic Analysis (EA).

Dr. Radović-Marković, please tell us about your background.

I was born in Belgrade, Serbia, into a family of intellectuals who doted on books and science. I believe it is family that largely traces our future path already during our childhood, and later is responsible for our professional orientation. After World War I my grandfather went to Paris, France, to study and stayed there for more than seven years upon graduation. My father spent some time studying in Prague, the Czech Republic, hence it was logical that I also should go abroad to specialize. I spent some time in the Netherlands, Russia, and the U.S.A. where I specialized in economics after completing my graduate, masterial and doctoral studies at the Faculty

of Economics at home. I was really lucky to be recognized by my lecturers already at the beginning and given a chance to join a small group of talented colleagues and publish my first scientific papers. When I was twenty, I was even in a position to present one such work at an international scientific meeting before the greatest world authorities in the science of economics. Never again have I been in a company of such a large number of world recognized and important scientists. It was a great challenge to me and I think I made the most of it.



I graduated in the analysis of the economic theory set by Joan Robinson, a famous world economist and a Cambridge professor who asked me a number of questions after I presented my work and then invited me to take up another diploma work that meant the analysis of her prolific output. Not only did I accept the offer; it was then that I made a decision that my future professional orientation would be science. It has remained so until this very moment.

I do not believe anything happens by chance, and this was proven in my career. Several decades have passed since this scientific meeting that was crucial for my career and a few years ago I had the honor to be the editor-in-chief of a journal started back in 1868 by Prof. Branko Horvat (twice nominated for the Nobel prize for economic science) whom I first met then. I accepted this task as any other professional tasks – with responsibility and as a great challenge. In order that the quality of the journal be re-established, it was necessary that high standards should be set, equal to those once established by a scientist such as Prof. Horvat. In addition to this, several years ago I started an international scientific journal, Women's

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Entrepreneurship and Education, where I am also the editor-in-chief and which immediately received highly favorable reviews and attracted attention of scientists worldwide. My professional and scientific engagement does not stop here, though.

I am highly committed to my work and work for twelve hours every day to answer my other professional duties and obligations. These include my work in the management of the Belgrade Institute of Economic Sciences, where I am employed on a full-time basis, the management of projects, presiding over the Scientific council of the Institute, managing basic research, lecturing at several universities at home and abroad, writing scientific papers and books and a lot more. Sometimes I am not even aware of how much I have accomplished on an annual basis until I have to write an annual report at the end of each calendar year. Lately, I have received numerous recognition awards to show for it. I would single out two honorary doctorates I was awarded earlier this year – one in India, the other in the U.S.A. – for a pioneering work and an exceptional scientific contribution in the field of women entrepreneurship. The honorary doctorate in India is a result of the success of my four books published there as well as my scientific collaboration with a number of faculties, whereas the one awarded in the U.S.A. is related to Akamai University where I was given a special opportunity and support to develop my ideas in the field of women entrepreneurship through creating new study programs. There is no higher recognition for a scientist and a professor than the recognition and acceptance of their work and contribution, especially in an international context.

What led you to working for Akamai University?

The main reason for my engagement at the Akamai University is a highly fruitful collaboration with its president, Dr. Doug Capogrossi, who has had a strong belief in me from the very beginning. He has never had any doubts about any of my suggestions, therefore I was free to create the program and other activities related to the University. Thanks to the fact that he was able to recognize good ideas although some of them were ahead of their time, the "Entrepreneurship for Women" program grew in time into a distinguishing mark of this University.

You are the program director for the Entrepreneurship for Women program at Akamai University. Can you tell me a little bit

more about the program? What does it cover and what are the degree requirements?

I am very proud of the fact that this magisterial program, Entrepreneurship for Women, is among the first of its kind not only at the Akamai University, but even broader. Rare are the universities that specified the entrepreneurship program in this way and focused upon women entrepreneurship. There certainly were people who held that there should be made no distinctions of this kind and that entrepreneurship should be taught in a classical method that incorporated certain general assumptions. In other words, the study of entrepreneurship was characterized by a neutral gender approach. In recent years the picture has gradually been changing. An increasing number of universities are becoming engaged in the issues of women entrepreneurship and study it as a discipline of its own. One of these is the GVF at Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey, US, where I am also engaged in work with students at the "Women as Entrepreneurs" program.

When I created this program and its concept, more than six years ago, I was led by an idea that it should highlight the basic specific features that distinguish the women in business, in order that women might recognize and take them as their advantage to fare better in a business world so far dominated by men. Also, it is my opinion that, in addition to the barriers women are faced with in their family and in the social environment in many parts of the world, they lack the knowledge and skills to succeed in the business they start up.

The globalization and the new economic winds, and in the last two years, the economic crisis, have largely changed the conditions of doing business. Those with adequate knowledge and skills to adapt to them will find it easier to fight the crisis and survive in these turbulent times. Since the position of women, due to their being overburdened with duties, is usually not so favorable as that of men, a large number of women are not in a position to improve permanently and master new knowledge. Therefore, many of them cannot start up a business and succeed in it. This was what I had in mind when I started this pioneer work at Akamai University. My attitude was that this program should help students in any possible way and prepare them to develop and do business autonomously, to understand what decisions they had to make when they embark on

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an entrepreneurship journey and what to expect in the future. For the time being, this is a diploma program open to the students who completed their four-year studies.

This magisterial program cannot be considered just as an alphabet of business, but as a seriously devised superstructure that includes a number of scientific disciplines, which makes it rather broadly designed. Also, I have to explain that, although it deals with women entrepreneurship, it is not meant only for women, but can be useful to anybody interested in this field of study. I believe that this and similar programs can be of great help to men to help them appreciate business women more seriously and through the interaction with them manage to understand one another and communicate better. Namely, a better understanding of differences leads to a better business and any other collaboration, and, consequently, to business success.

As a director of this program I constantly improve it, change it and adjust it to the needs of the global business environment, using both my books and other scientific works and papers that are always at students' disposal as well as the additional literature by other authors. Recently I added my three new books to this list of references: WOMEN IN BUSINESS: Theory, Practice and Flexible Approaches, published by Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2010, London, UK; Female Entrepreneurship and local Economic Growth: A Case of Countries in Transition, Denver, USA, 2009, 505pp; and Women Entrepreneurs: New Opportunities and Challenges; IA Books, Delhi, India, 2009, 206 pp.

You teach several degree courses including "The Entrepreneurship Process." What can you tell us about these learning opportunities?

Perhaps the crucial precondition for decision making when setting up your own business is that you understand the entrepreneurship process correctly. Namely, the entrepreneurship process includes not only the problem solving activity, typical of the managerial position in a firm, but much more. In other words, an entrepreneur has to work out and develop the solutions to overcome all the retrograde forces that hinder the creation of something new. Hence this course is rather useful and makes a compulsory part of the Entrepreneurship Program.

What do you think are the benefits of formal education and online education for the virtual entrepreneur?

The academics do not always agree as regards the correlation between the entrepreneurs' education and the success in new business. A number of experts maintain that formal education/training stifles the creativity and spontaneity in entrepreneurs as it provides too many guidelines and rules they cannot but follow. I do not agree. I believe that education and training help reduce errors and risk in business. Hence I am an advocate of the "lifelong learning" doctrine. Talent only is not enough in any activity, business being no exception. It has to be developed through various forms of education regardless of whether it is a formal or informal education. A special role in the context of permanent education belongs to virtual universities and to education via the Internet. Due to the facilities the online education offers in view of the flexibility of studies, it is the right choice for the employed. This form of learning especially appeals to women, since it allows them to coordinate their private and business obligations with their need to improve and advance. Education is equally necessary for all kinds of entrepreneurs. It certainly is for the entrepreneurs engaged in the Internet business. They have to be taught how to replace the classic model of business control and management by the new models. These will increasingly be based on creating virtual business networks of customers, collaborators, employees and others, which will, on one hand, provide the virtual firms with a permanent contact with them, and, on the other hand, reduce the costs of operations. It is expected that in the next twenty years or so, the opportunities for electronic business will be much greater than today, due to a fast development of modern technologies; therefore, the Internet entrepreneurs will need new knowledge in order that they should take all the opportunities that will "open" to them in time. 📖

This concludes the first half of the interview with Professor Radović-Marković. The remainder of the interview will be published in the November issue of TVE Magazine. We would like to thank Professor Radović-Marković for taking the time to answer our questions. ☺