



SPECIAL GUEST SPEECH FOR

*EUROPEAN TRANSFORMING EDUCATION CONFERENCE "THE FOSTERING OF THE YOUTH  
TRANSVERSAL SKILLS IN THE NEW EU AND IN VIEW OF THE UN SDG 2030 VISION"*

*10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL HONORARY CHAIR "JEAN BART" (CIO-SUERD)*

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Technology  
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# THANK YOU AND GREETINGS FROM PNG!

Dear Sandu ZAMFIRESCU, Secretary General, Assoc. Prof. Sever AVRAM, General Coordinator, CIO-SUERD "Jean Bart", Distinguished Guests, Professors, Colleagues and Students:

*First*, I wish to convey my sincere greetings to you all from The Papua New Guinea University of Technology in Lae, where I am a Professor in the Department of Communication and Development Studies. Perhaps you know that Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a diverse land of 7+ million people with 800+ tribes and languages. Our University has 13 academic departments and about 3000 on-campus undergraduate students and numerous graduate students from Master's to PhD students as well. These students are supported by approximately 300 academic teaching staff and 800 or so support staff. We also participate in ACU and European Union exchange programs. (More information can be found at our website [www.unitech.ac.pg](http://www.unitech.ac.pg))

# ABOUT MY DEPARTMENT (OF COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES [CDS])

*Second*, I would like to introduce the Department from my perspective. I am a Professor in the Department of Communication and Development Studies at PNGUoT. I have been here since June, 2013. Our Department is described thusly, in our *Handbook 2022*:

## *History of the Department*

The Communication and Development Studies Department was first established as the Department of Language and Social Sciences (DoLSS) in the late 1960s.. Its function was to teach English-language skills for academic purposes to students in all academic departments of the university. Then in the 1980s, the DoLSS underwent a further name-change to the Department of Language and Communication Studies (DoLCS). In 1995, the Department began offering a certificate course which, four years later, led to seeing its first graduates holding a Bachelor of Technology in Communication for Development (BTCd) in 1999.

In 2010, the DoLCS changed its name once more to the Department of Communication and Development Studies (DoCDS) to better reflect relevant changes in the university structures and its undergraduate academic programs, as well as meeting new industry demands. The name-change also reflects the introduction of its post-graduate programs via the two-year Master of Communication Studies (MCS), a three-year Master of Arts in Organisational Leadership (MAOL) and varied six-year Doctor of Philosophy courses introduced in 2009, 2011 and 2013 respectively.

While maintaining its original purpose of teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to students of other academic departments, the Department is also actively offering its own professional Communication for Development (C4D) program to students and has since been training and graduating human resources to serve as public relations officers, community affairs officers, liaison officers, personnel officers, and communication officers serving in both the public and the private sectors while others have progressed to occupying senior positions in the country.

# VISION AND MISSION OF THE CDS DEPARTMENT

## *Vision:*

Strive to be a leading humanities and social-science based academic Department in Papua New Guinea and in the Pacific Islands Region.

## *Mission Statement:*

To develop and offer academic teaching, initiate and carry out research, and provide community service aimed at cultivating knowledge and skill levels, developing innovative and creative abilities, and instituting discipline and proper conduct of behavior.

# PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF THE CDS DEPARTMENT

- ❖ To teach and facilitate conducive academic learning for students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels within an environment that will unlock their full potentials and creative abilities so to produce intelligent, qualified and wise graduates.
- ❖ To initiate and carry out applied and pure research aimed at addressing current socio-economic and political concerns, to effectively contribute to the ever-developing domains of knowledge in both humanistic and social science fields.
- ❖ To initiate and collaborate with relevant industries and other government and civil society groups so as to maintain and continue the important and key function of university-community engagement.
- ❖ To promote and provide community service through active and mutual collaboration and partnership engagement in various capacities with different communities.
- ❖ To institute strong discipline and proper conduct of behavior aimed at producing graduates who are not only knowledgeable, skilled, innovative and creative but who have the right attitude to excel in the workplace.
- ❖ To promote equal opportunities for all faculty members to work in teams to prepare relevant materials to run workshops and trainings on effective communication skills and strategies, in light of the UN and national development agendas.

# BACKGROUND OF THE CDS DEPARTMENT'S UNDERGRADUATE COURSES OF STUDY

The Department teaches students enrolled in most degree courses offered by the University academic departments. All first-year students take two subjects in Communication and Development Studies (CD 112 and CD 122). At this level, the main objectives are to provide academic skills necessary to equip students to pursue studies successfully and to introduce them to communication in the workplace as preparation for their future careers.

In addition, students enrolled in academic programmes in all Departments take from one to three subjects in Communication and Development Studies in their subsequent years of study; these include CD 223 Effective Communication Skills and Ethics at Workplace and CD 314 Research Methods and Skills. All these subjects are designed to meet practical and specific communicative needs, and academic staff teaching them liaise closely with academics in other professional Departments.

Currently, the Department offers a degree programme at the undergraduate level in Communication for Development (C4D). The degree course, lasting eight semesters (four years), includes one semester of industrial experience.

The undergraduate subjects in this course are designed to offer appropriate professional training for media reporters/public relations/community development/liaison officers, especially for work with resource development companies, government departments or landowner associations. The subjects are interdisciplinary in nature, including subjects from disciplines within the University which provide students with the relevant background knowledge and skills in technical, scientific, commercial, legal and social fields as well as the appropriate communicative skills, techniques and strategies to carry out their work effectively. The programme aptly combines theoretical and practical elements. (Handbook 2022)

# **(POST)GRADUATE TEACHING ACTIVITIES AT THE CDS DEPARTMENT**

Postgraduate studies and research is important to us too at the CDS Department. As noted in our 2021 *Postgraduate Handbook*:

In 2009, the Department began offering a Masters in Communication Studies (MCS) program. This program has both a course work and a dissertation component, where the students write a research paper on an appropriate topic in their final semester of the second year. In addition, a Masters of Arts in Organizational Leadership is periodically offered in cooperation with Development Associates International (DAI), The Christian Leadership Training College of Papua New Guinea (CLTC), and the Pioneers of Australia. Furthermore, the PhD and MPhil programs continue, with one graduate to date and two currently enrolled.

# (POST)GRADUATE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT THE CDS DEPARTMENT

As concerns *research activities*, the Department of Communication and Development Studies at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology is a department that blends three broad academic strands (Language and Communication Studies, Sociology, and Communication for Development). Through its individual members of staff, research is conducted in under general umbrellas (Linguistics and Culture, English for Academic Purposes/EAP, English for Special Purposes/ESP, Sociology, and Communication for Development). General and sub-topics include:

In *Linguistics and Culture*, focus is given to PNG national languages, comparative linguistics, and the interface between society and language across time. In EAP or ESP, research topics include: Classroom research, EAP/ESP methodology, course design, material design, genre analysis, rights analysis, critical EAP/ESP, reading and writing, testing and evaluation, computer-mediated language learning, EAP/ESP research, and socio-linguistic influences on the teaching and learning of EAP/ESP.

In the general area of *Sociology*, research foci include fieldwork, health, corrections, communication theory and practice, media studies, critical-cultural studies, and comparative higher education studies. Another thread is concerned with the problems of youth in society, especially on topics such as integration, sex education, and social behavior.

In the *Communication for Development* (C4D) area, the sub-topics of research interests include: communication in education, communication and gender, communication in resource management, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, partnership building, communicating development in such sectoral contexts as economic industries, healthcare, agriculture, etc., as well as democracy and human rights, and HIV/AIDS.



# RESEARCH METHODS AND OUTPUTS OF THE CDS DEPARTMENT

Both empirical (quantitative) or qualitative approaches to relevant topics are employed by our academics, with trans-disciplinary innovations (such as action research) encouraged. The Department publishes an international peer-reviewed organ, the *JCDS: Journal of Communication and Development Studies* under the editorship of myself in cooperation with the UNESCO Chair of Quality Management of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning of "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Romania, and its Director, Prof *habil.* Dr Silvia Florea.

# MY PERSONAL VIEW OF RESEARCH IN THE CRUCIBLE OF COMMUNICATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

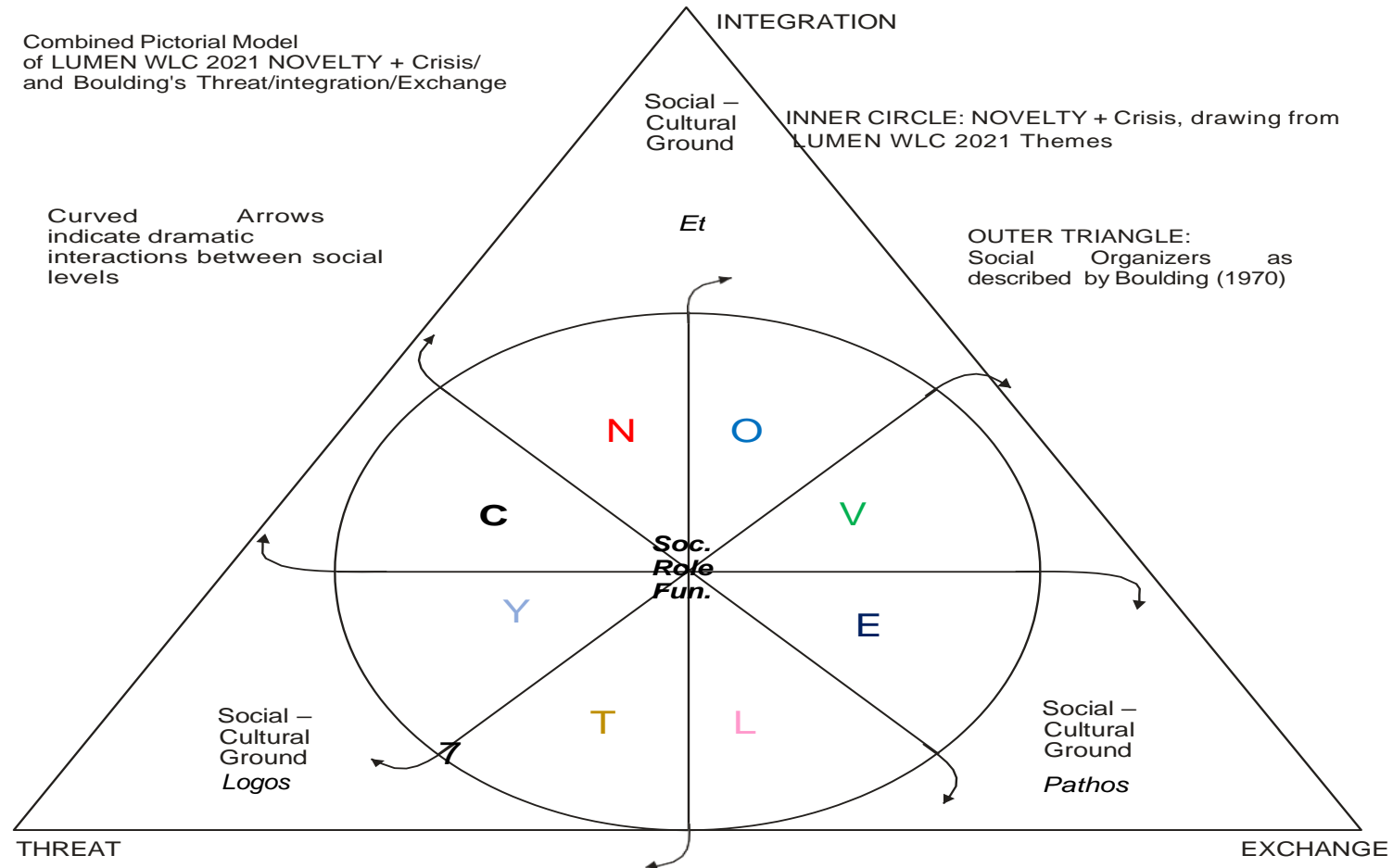
*Third*, drawing from recent works, including with Sever Avram (Gilder, 2016, Avram & Gilder, 2021; Gilder, 2021), I wish to note to you the key elements of substantive and philosophically sound research on the vectors of *LUMEN*, i.e., *Logic, Universality, Mentality, Education and Novelty*. I argue there that thinkers as diverse as George A. Kelly, Kenneth Boulding, Kenneth Burke and Marshall McLuhan have all thought deeply on the definitions and implications of thinking and applying such expansive constructs in teaching, learning and research in our times of crisis. I then analyzed their views according to my own interpretive models of critical understanding and action, both on personal-functional and social-role levels (Gilder, 2016).

From this foundation, I then created a model of creative *NOVELTY*:

# THE TIE/NOVELTY WHEEL

## FIGURE OUTLINING NOVELTY + CRISIS

(DERIVED FROM GILDER, 2003; AVRAM & GILDER, 2021)



# MY RENDERING OF THE ELEMENTS OF *NOVELTY* IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

*Fourth, as my substantive contribution to your conference, I will now outline (for the first time) what these elements of enacting *NOVELTY* facing crisis in teaching, learning and research should embrace and be(come):*

1. *Non-Linearity*
2. *Organicism* in Conception
3. *Violation* of Intellectual/Policy Norms
4. *Eclecticism* in Thought
5. *Lateral* (versus vertical) thinking
6. *Transdisciplinary* Approaches to Research
7. *Y* Theory of Organizational Model for Management of Research

# IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION, A CHALLENGE

*Finally*, I end my guest speech to you all not with conclusions, for the ongoing, current crises we face as a global community on all fronts (social-economic/political, militarily, ecologically, etc.) serve to make such assertions both arrogant and most likely wrong. Instead, I will instead ask you to join me and my colleagues at the PNGUoT Department of Communication and Development Studies in refining and elaborating the seven elements of *NOVELTY* as could be applied to transversal (higher) education for youth as well as research that I have herein described so together, we can generate the necessary resilience for ourselves as individuals and collectives to transform “education and training in order to achieve the Next Generation EU Agenda and, in the same time, the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”

In closing, let me wish you all, once again, a most engaging and successful European Transforming Education Conference, and its organizers, i.e., the International Honorary Chair “Jean Bart” (CIO-SUERD) and the EUROLINK-House of Europe in Bucharest, the best future!

God bless!

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- Note:* An earlier version of this presentation was given as a “Valedictory Speech for ICAIR Conference at Sangam University, Bhilwara (Raj.) 8 October 2022,” India.



## **AUTHOR'S BIODATA**

Presently a Professor of Communication and Development Studies at The Papua New Guinea University of Technology, Eric Gilder is from the United States of America (PhD, The Ohio State University), with professional academic experience spanning over thirty-five years of teaching undergraduate and post-graduate programs at colleges and universities in the USA, Romania, Korea, and Liberia, as well as being a higher education specialist consultant for (inter) national organizations such as the Open Society Foundation and UNESCO (among others). In Romania, he is an habilitated doctoral professor of Philology in the Interdisciplinary Doctoral/Post-Doctoral School (IOSUD) at the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu, Romania.