

# Production and Operations Management

## Call for Papers – Special Issue:

### Humanitarian Operations and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

**Deadline: January 31, 2020**

#### Background

Despite extraordinary technological innovations, modern societies still face basic humanitarian challenges. According to the United Nations (UN), more than 750 million people live below the international poverty line of US\$2 a day, and at least 800 million are undernourished. While access to healthcare has improved, five million children each year (or 1,000 children a day) still die before the age of five because of preventable water and sanitation-related diarrheal diseases. Reliable electricity and internet access are far from given, and schooling remains a major problem, especially in conflict-affected areas<sup>1</sup>.

Unfortunately, the increase in global population could contribute to the exacerbation of humanitarian problems. Population growth would increase the consumption of natural resources, including non-renewables. Scarcity of natural resources could lead to more man-made disasters and armed conflicts.

But not all is negative. Humanitarian challenges and the need for sustainable development motivated the UN to formulate a set of Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The UNSDGs include no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, clean energy, responsible production and consumption, and action against climate change. Cross-sectorial partnerships could facilitate the monumental task of achieving the UNSDGs. This would be the case if governments, private companies, humanitarian organizations, and civil societies work together, placing people and the planet at the center and sharing the costs that arise<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, technological innovations would allow new approaches to the study of complex problems, because new technologies provide access to data that couldn't have been collected or analyzed before.

Technology and business definitely have a role to play in least developed countries. For example, even though the number of Internet users in Africa almost doubled in the past four years, there are still more than four billion people who do not use the Internet, and 90 percent of them are from the developing world. Improving internet access can encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and the growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. In general, economic development has a positive impact on job creation and hence on society<sup>3</sup>.

#### Objective

The POM Journal publishes research on topics such as humanitarian operations, sustainable operations, supply chain management, healthcare, and not-for-profit operations management. This special issue aligns with POM's editorial statement. The special issue will aim at opening new research areas on production and operations management related to UNSDGs. It will include topics such as the mitigation of preventable diseases, the improvement of food supply through the empowerment of smallholders and decreasing the consequences of serious natural and man-made disasters through the management of humanitarian crises.

This special issue will publish rigorous research that is solidly anchored in reality by searching for solutions to specific problems that the UNSDGs are raising, making assumptions that are convincingly based on facts and data, and discussing how the results were validated and used in the field. Hence, the submissions should explicitly describe the problem context, justify the data used, and clearly

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

discuss how their findings can be applied in the field. We are particularly interested in stimulating research in operations management that help to better understand the complexity of UNSDGs and how they could be accomplished, for example through building cross-sectoral partnerships that aim to improve developmental and humanitarian aid.

We are looking for robust studies that present relevant and original work related to UNSDGs. We welcome different disciplines and methodologies. To fit the mission of the special issue, the papers should have a solid practical foundation and fit one or more of the following categories:

1. Analytical modelling: Papers well-grounded in frameworks that capture defining characteristics of UNSDG settings.
2. Empirical: Papers that use public data, proprietary data or experiments to test new theories related to UNSDGs.
3. Multimethod: Papers that combine different methods, such as case studies, interviews, etc., for triangulation purposes.
4. Multidisciplinary: Papers that build upon knowledge or methods from multiple disciplines.

Authors should explicitly indicate what category (analytical modelling, empirical, multimethod, multidisciplinary) or categories they fit. Regarding solid practical foundation, we seek the participation of practitioners confirming the papers tackle UNSDG-related issues grounded in reality, and results are usable in the field.

#### **Guest Editors**

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