

On August 20th, 2020, CIL held the 3rd session of webinar series “COVID-19 and beyond: Towards an Inclusive Workplace and Society.” Moderated by Associate Professor Shinohara, Deputy Director of CIL, the webinar welcomed two guest speakers from APU - Professor KIM Rebecca ChungHee and Emeritus Professor Cooper Malcolm.

Drawing on up-to-date news and articles, Professor Kim cited examples of unprecedented chaos and disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Finding solutions to such crisis situations is no easy task for any businessperson, but we can gain insights, she said, by looking back at what Beethoven did in the worst of crises, which was to adapt and innovate.

Emphasizing the crucial role of business leadership, Professor Kim discussed important qualities of an inclusive business leader in crisis, including the ability to use data and statistics, to stay calm and maintain motivation while leading with decisiveness and humanity. She closed the presentation by encouraging all of us to prepare for the ‘new normal’ and be ready with strong inclusive leadership.

Next, Professor Cooper explained why COVID-19, much as it caused massive humanitarian and business challenges, should be viewed as an opportunity to reset how work gets done in a more efficient and effective way. Showing evidence that the pandemic forced businesses and communities to achieve what had been previously thought impossible, he argued that barriers to boldness and speed for change are not technical limits but more about mindsets. In this “magic moment”, suggested by Professor Cooper, at least two areas are ready for innovation - goal setting and operating models incorporating inclusivity.

He closed the talk by sharing some updates about the tourism industry, the hardest hit of all sectors. Despite severe damages, the industry has shown gradual recovery and optimistic outlook for the bright future.