JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



Universities under pressure: A global perspective

Magna Carta Conference, 15 October 2026









Universities under threats

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- 1933-45: Nazi Germany
- 1950-54: McCarthyism
- 1966-76: Cultural Revolution in China






Universities in the digital era

Loss of trust

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Elitism
- Affordability and value for money
- Lack of relevance

Outline

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Disruptions, threats, and challenges
- Building trust and resilience

The challenges

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Financial turmoil
- Climate change
- Technological disruptions
- Decline of democracy & rise in cultural wars

Economic and financial upheavals

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Brutal cuts in 2025: Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, UK, USA
- 2026: England, Germany (Berlin), Belgium (Flanders), USA (42 billion), Czech Republic
- Continuing austerity: Greece, Spain, and Türkiye
- “Suicidal” decisions on international student visas in Australia, Canada, UK, and United States


ROAD
CLOSED

Impact of climate change



- Campuses affected by floods, droughts, wildfires, and rising energy costs
- Physical damage to buildings and student housing
- Displacement of students and staff
- Class cancellations, exam disruptions, enrollment decline
- Strain on campus emergency response and finances


THE KATHMANDU POST


International New York Times
DRC
HUBO
2

The future of jobs in the digital and green transitions

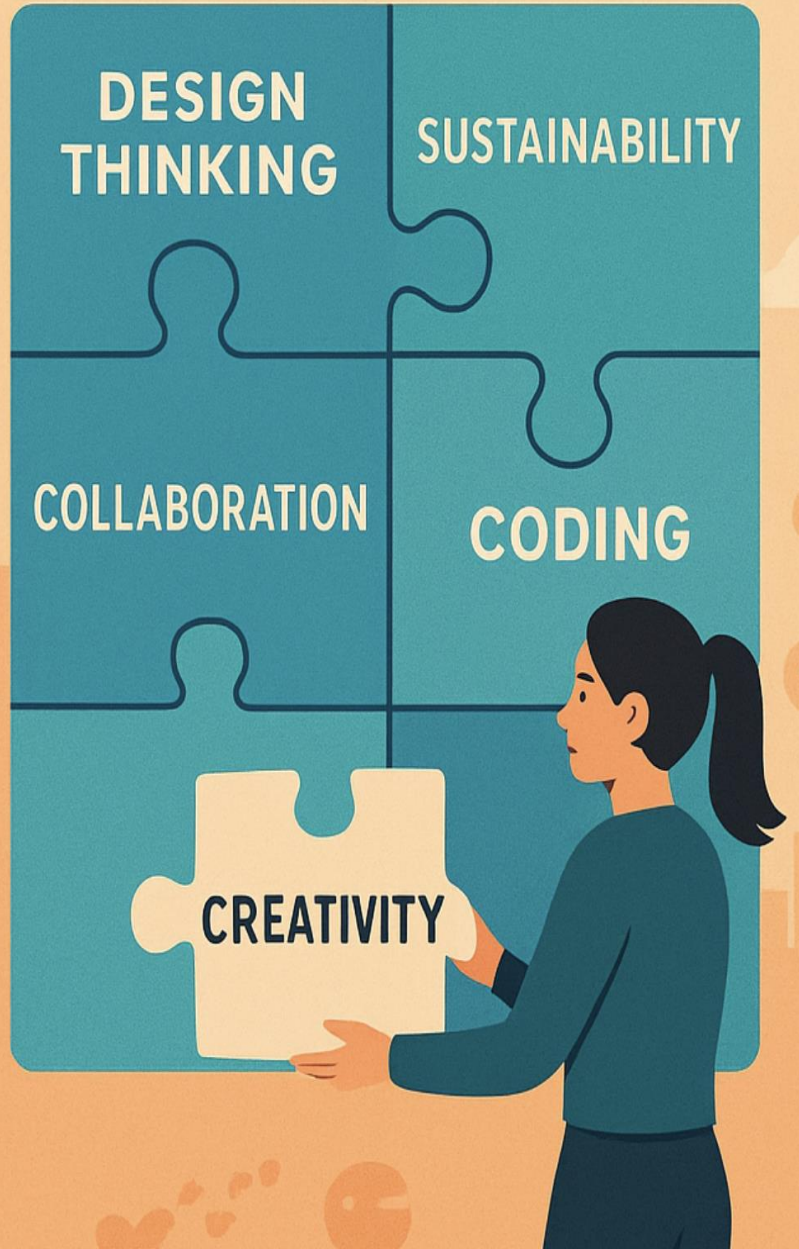
JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Jobs that disappear
- New jobs emerging
- Existing jobs adapting

TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITY SKILLS



FUTURE OF WORK



AI platforms

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



Disruptor, destructor, or enhancer?



Pros and Cons of AI

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Immediate access to a wealth of relevant information
- AI feedback and tutoring
- Writing, thinking, and creativity?

"An immediate answer satisfies the desire to know but kills the desire to learn."

(Philippe Meirieu)


NO ME PREOCUPA EL AVANCE DE LA INTELIGENCIA ARTIFICIAL ME PREOCUPA ES EL RETROCESO DE LA LA INTELIGENCIA NATURAL

They destroyed my field of investigation ...




UNISA
university of south africa
AI FALSE POSITIVE RUINED MY DEGREE
STUDENTS ARE NOT ROBOTS



Cultural wars

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Backlash against equity promotion

Assault on equity: three forms

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Exclusion of targeted groups (women in Afghanistan and Florida, LGBTIQ+ community, names and tribal affiliations, hair and dress style)
- Elimination of equity promotion programs (affirmative action, DEI, financial aid)
- Prohibition of courses, censorship, book banning, and indoctrination


© picture-alliance/Georg Gerbel


SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Cultural wars

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Backlash against equity promotion
- Rejection of science (climate change, public health)
  - Consequences: defunding, measles epidemic, reduced food safety

Many scientific fields ...

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Agricultural biotechnology
- Archeology and anthropology
- Astronomy
- Ecotoxicology
- Environmental science
- Genetics
- Geology and earth science
- Physics and energy
- Space science
- Tobacco science

Fake news, untruths, and post-truth

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- ”I don’t care what the facts say” (former President Bush)
- “We would like to present alternative facts” (Mr. Spicer – first Trump administration
  - “Sometimes we can disagree with the facts.”
- We are done listening to the experts“ (British Minister of Education)
- Vaccine sceptic as French Minister of Higher Education (2025)

Outline

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Disruptions, threats, and challenges
- **Building trust and resilience**

Drivers of trust and resilience

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Innovative educational model
- Focus on results and outcomes
- Truth and scientific evidence
- Social responsibility

Learning is not a spectator sport



Student-Centered Learning

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Sparking Curiosity
  - Igniting Passion
    - Unleashing Genius

Empower your students

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



Creativity

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert













Pillars of trust and resilience

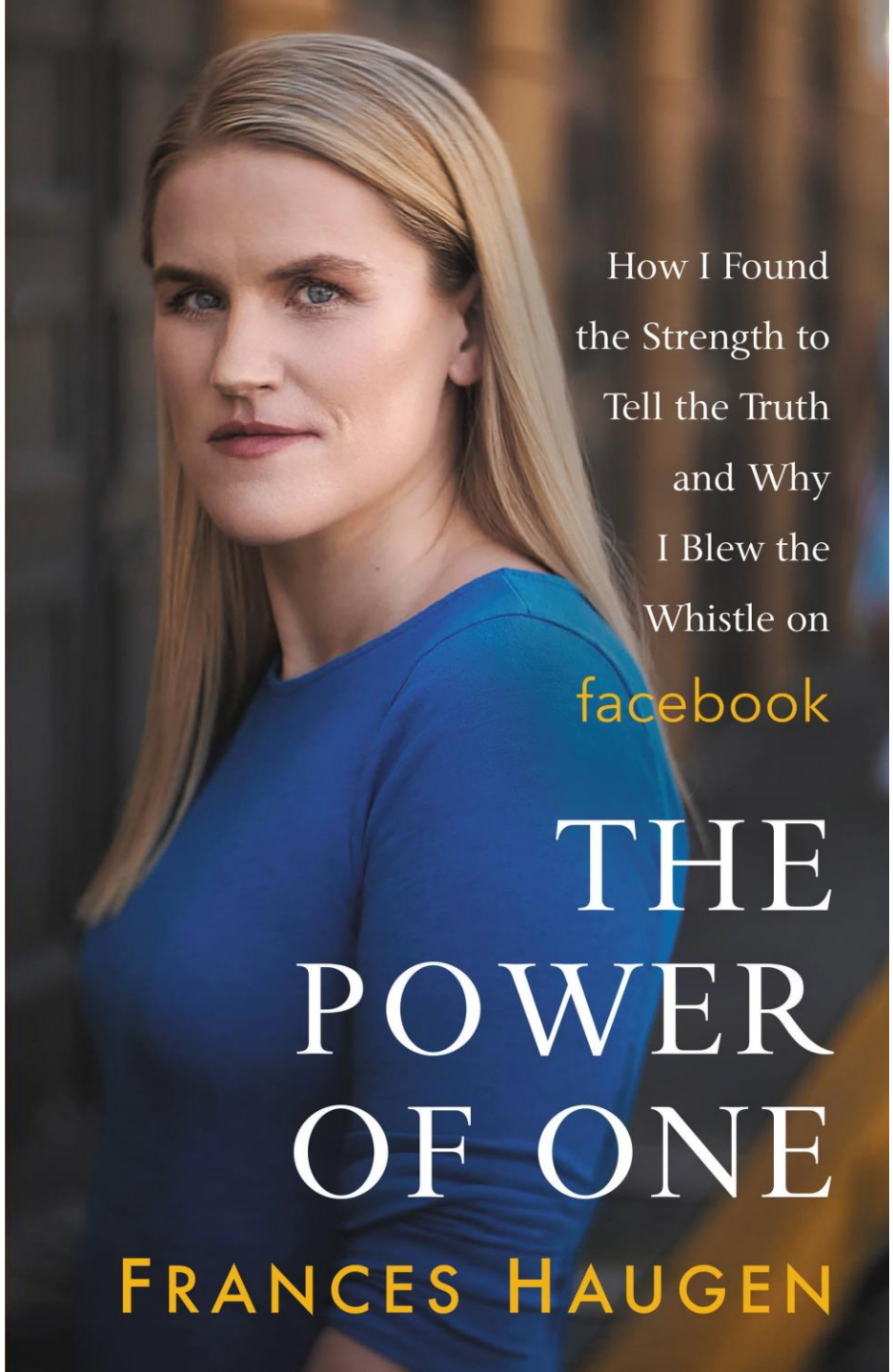
JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Innovative educational model
- **Focus on results and outcomes**

Focus on results and outcomes

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Learning outcomes and competencies acquired
- Employment results
- Added value
- Ethics and values


How I Found
the Strength to
Tell the Truth
and Why
I Blew the
Whistle on
facebook
THE
POWER
OF ONE
FRANCES HAUGEN

Critical thinking & respect for scientific evidence

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Distinguish between real evidence and fabricated information (truth-seeking skills)
- Reinstate academic tradition of free and fair debates, undermined by relativism and political correctness
- Rebuild trust in academics and science
- Improve communication channels between universities and society

Magna Charta (1988)

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



"As they create and disseminate knowledge, universities question dogmas and established doctrines and encourage critical thinking in all students and scholars. Academic freedom is their lifeblood; open enquiry and dialogue their nourishment."

Ivory Tower or agent of change?

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



Social responsibility

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Contribution to the SDGs
- Equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Climate change (green campus, programs and curricula for the green transition, working with local communities)

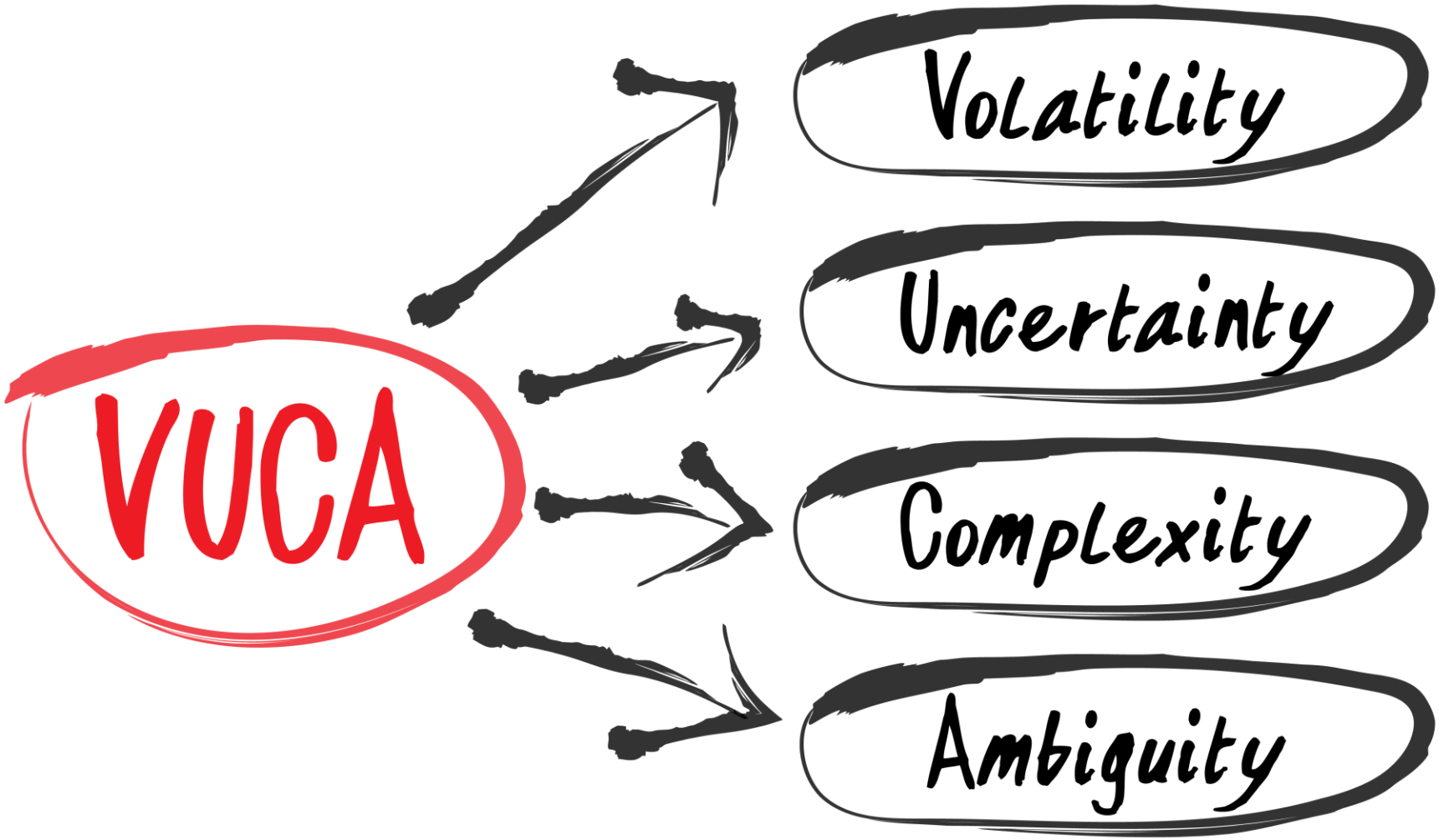
Aix-Marseille University

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Safe place for science
- Political commitment
  - Housing and precarity
  - Discrimination and inequalities
  - Health and mental health
  - Technologies of the future
  - Transition to work
  - Adaptation to climate change
  - Democracy and youth



Conclusion


VUCA
Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity

Leadership

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert







Leadership

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Transformative vision and inspiring goals
- Innovation, exploration, and experimentation mindset
  - Empower people to believe in themselves
  - Learn from failure and success
- Be a good listener
- Embrace ambiguity
- Think about consequences

Risk assessment & mitigation

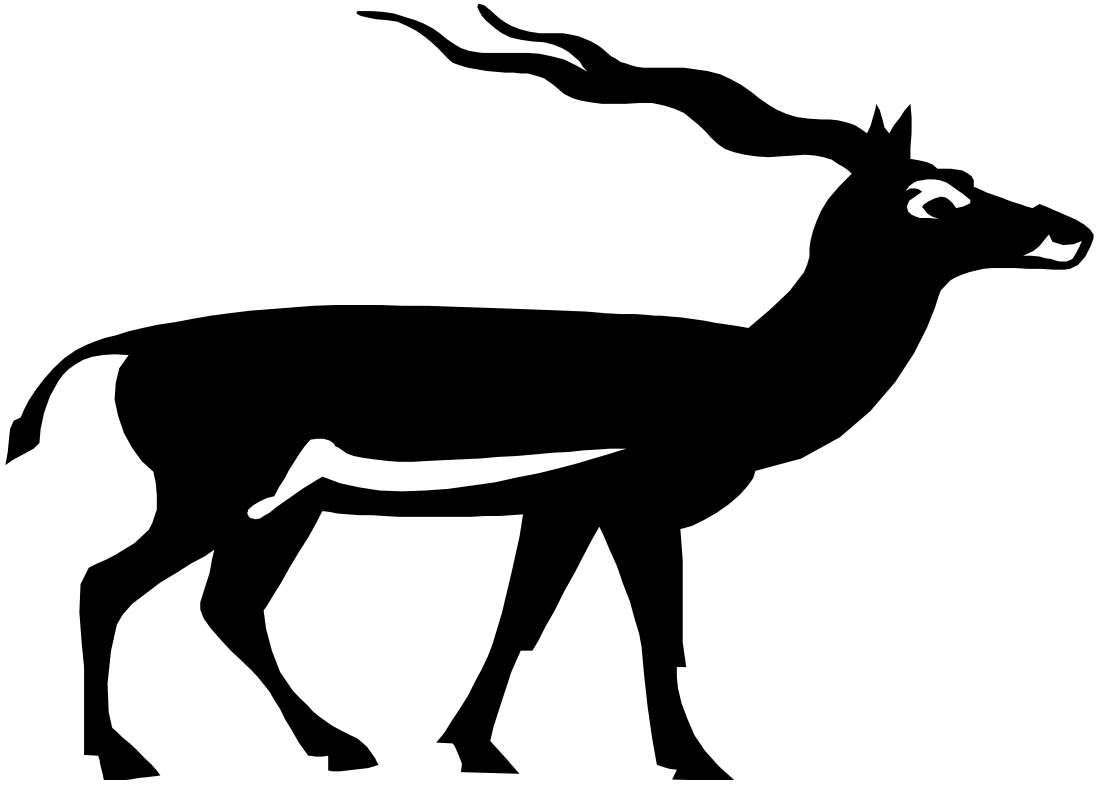
JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



- Prospective (future-oriented scanning)
  - Economic, political, environmental, and health crises
  - Future jobs (digital, green, and blue transitions)
  - Harnessing AI in an intelligent and ethical manner
- Constant feedback and capacity for adjustments
- Speed in making decisions

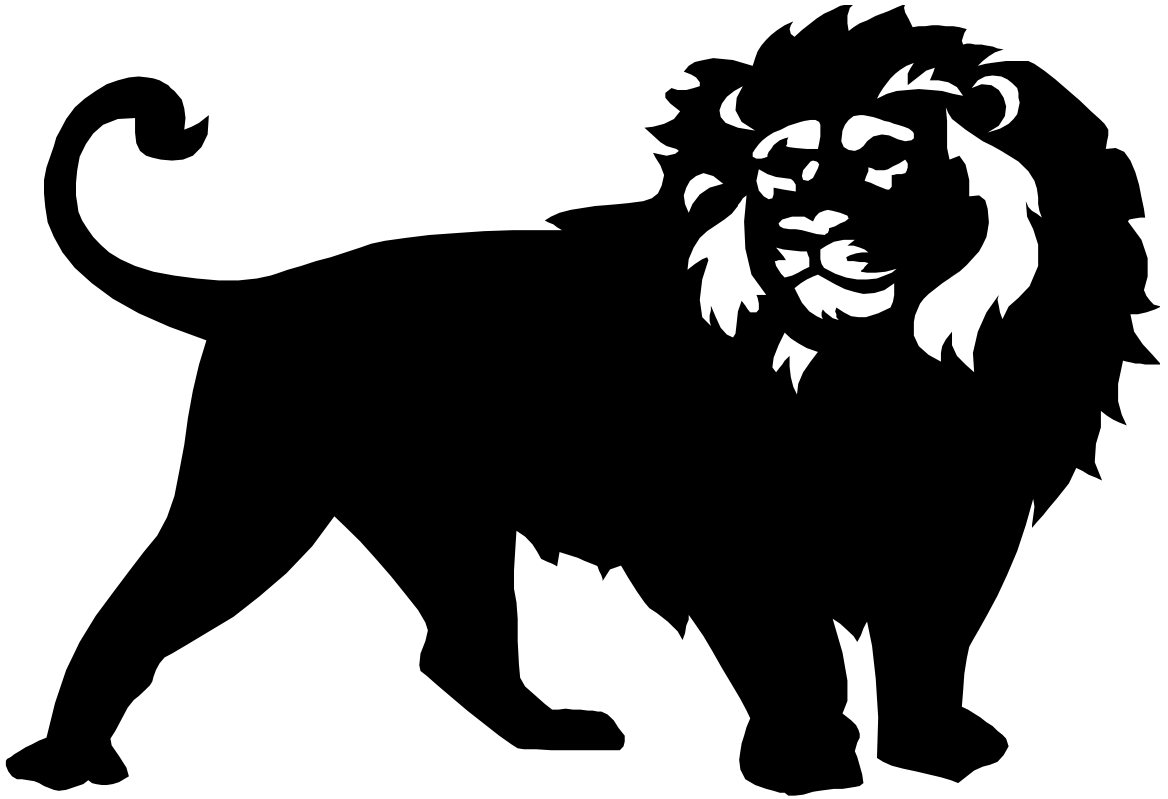
Competing in the Knowledge Society

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert



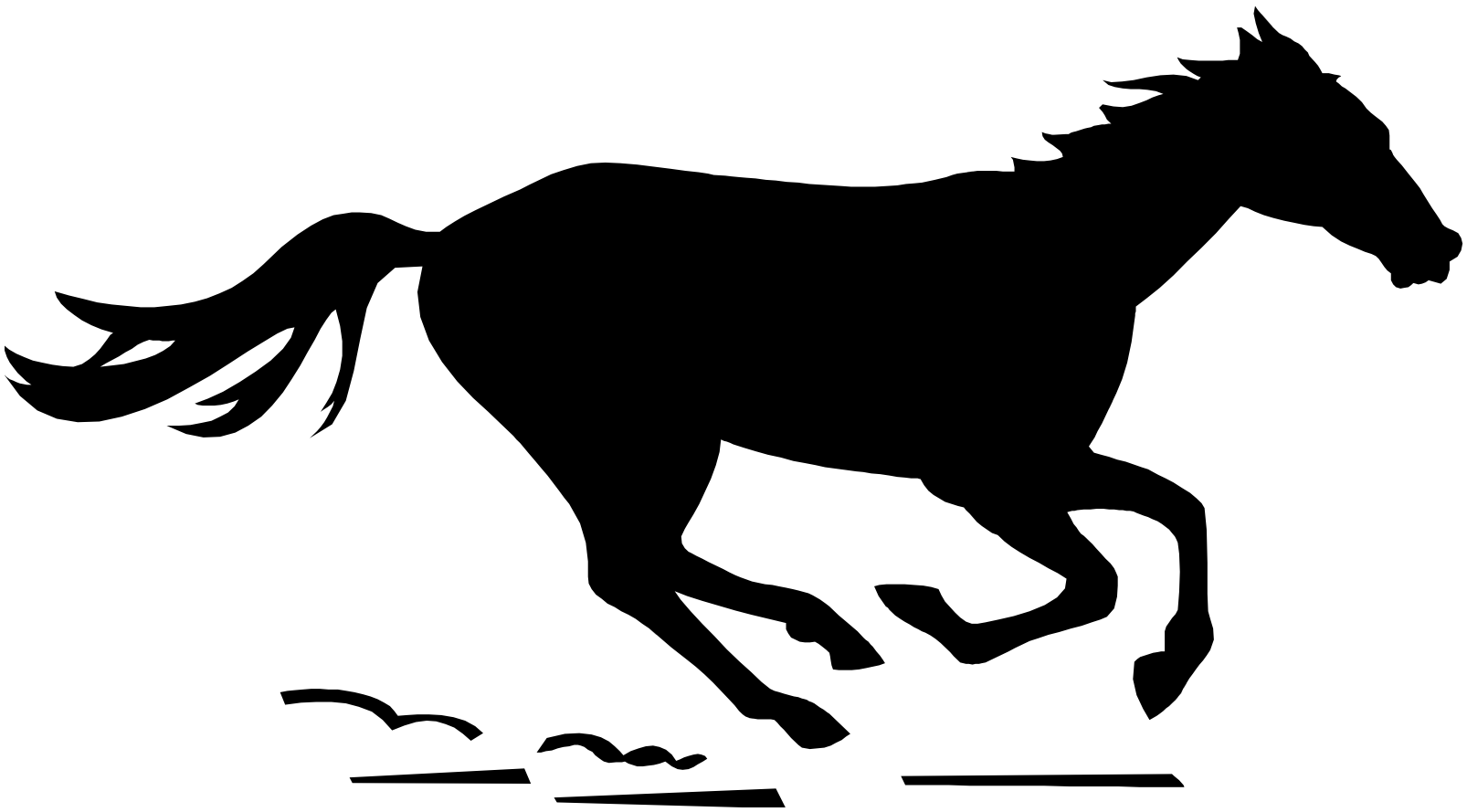
Competing in the Knowledge Society

JAMI JASALMI
Global Literacy Education Expert



Competing in the Knowledge Society

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert







Trust

JAMIL SALMI
Global Tertiary Education Expert

- Trust is powerful
- Trust is fragile
- Trust is about truth and transparency and shared values
- Trust is based on mutual respect

