

# Game of Thrones? – Davos, the download

## Mark Campanale, Tribe Impact Capital Fellow and Founder of the Carbon Tracker Initiative, reports back on his personal take from this year's Davos.

On arriving, you quickly come to understand that the World Economic Forum in Davos isn't one event, but a series. Focused around the 'official' conference, global heads of corporations and governments gather: this is what we see covered on CNN or the BBC news networks. Outside this zone, a much larger muddle of NGO, policymakers and commentators gather, fighting for attention of both media and attendees. This parallel Davos is less well known, but is as jam-packed. And this is where I spent my week.

The key to making Davos work for you is to learn how to navigate the complex network of parallel events, receptions and dinners. As there is no 'programme' to skim through, so working out where to be - and with whom - requires a good network. If fortune shines on you, attending events with just a 'hotel pass' (rather than the official 'basic' attendance pass that can cost \$50,000) can be and is often thoroughly rewarding. The schedule I created was focused on sustainability, financing the SDGs, climate change, sustainable food systems and yes - inevitably - what block chain will do to turn the world of business and finance on its head.

If you like hopping between bars and hotel lobbies and dropping informally into wide ranging but thoughtful discussions (often with well-known public figures) then Davos is worth the hassle. My home in the corridors and basement rooms of the Belvedere Hotel, opposite the convention centre, is the PWC lounge. This will give you all the free coffee, chocolate macaroons (and white wine) you can wish for, served by the always courteous and helpful Swiss barfolk. Last year, I found myself sitting next to David Miliband, Cherie Blair and Muhammad Yunus.

### SUPERPOWERS

As this small Swiss skiing village's hotels, bars and restaurants are taken over by corporates and government delegations, many of them, if not blocked by security with machine pistols, are worth a visit. Salesforce and Facebook seem to have created their own village inside a village. Aberdeen Standard had their customary lone Scottish piper outside their centre, playing a loud and moody traditional lament. Something necessary methinks, in expectation of the arrival of President Trump's delegation.

The 'invest in India' is actually two centres and there, once I found the right site, I met for tea with Preeti Sinha, Senior President of India's Yes Bank and Global Convenor of the Yes Global Institute. I was fascinated to learn about her involvement in promoting impact investing in India, in partnership with the [Impact Investors Council and Sir Ronnie Cohen](#).

The Russia House appears to be (coincidentally?) located opposite their Ukrainian peers. Russia House's international programme is well organised and I was able to sit in a discussion on social investment and philanthropy in Russia, as a guest of Abigail Noble from [The ImPact](#), a coalition of families committed to impact investing. The discussion was with Valerie Rockefeller, chair of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the heads of eight different Russian foundations. In a post-Communist economy, business leaders are now thinking of the role of the third sector in meeting the social and educational needs of a rapidly transforming society. With much of this new wealth built on oil, it was good to see Valerie, an heir of the Standard Oil fortune, share experience with Russia's new oil elite.

### GENDER AND CAPITAL

A special mention has to be made of the unique '[Female Quotient Lounge](#)' whose schedule of discussions is dedicated to women's empowerment and how to take equality from an ideal to a reality. "Transformation will happen only if men and women work together, and this lounge will focus on activating solutions for change." Another Tribe Fellow and friend, Suzanne Biegel, was there making her presence felt, promoting the role of women in business leadership in addressing the SDGs, in her session on The Era Of Gender Lens Investing.

There I sat in on a fascinating discussion on the Mobilizing Capital For A Better World, moderated by Helen Joyce, finance editor of the Economist with Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, Chair, Business & Sustainable Development Commission and Daniel Pinto, CEO of JP Morgan Corporate & Investment Bank. This event did make me wonder whether the largest of the banks can really move fast enough to tackle major challenges of poverty alleviation and sustainability, as it appears it's just so difficult for mainstream bank platforms to put 'impact' products on their investment platforms.

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Afterwards at the Female Quotient Lounge, I was pleased to spend time with David Hayman, Special Advisor to the [ONE organisation](#), set up by Bono, who is playing a key role on the transparency and disclosure of international corporations. They have a clear ambition and that it includes transforming how financial markets work.

## DINNERS AND DIGESTS

The ‘World Food Tent’ ran a series of engaging discussion on sustainable food systems and I learnt a great deal from a breakfast discussion with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, EAT Foundation, and Unilever. Focused on sustainable food systems, this clearly a key challenge for growing global population, as a third of whom is obese whilst another third are “nutrition poor”.

The night before, I’d attended the closing drinks reception of the Business & Sustainable Development Commission’s report launch “[Better Finance, Better World: the Blended Capital Taskforce](#)” focused on financing the SDGs. I was very happy to find myself in conversation with Tanja Havemann of Clarmondial, whose “Food Securities Fund”, a collaboration with several well-known agricultural industry players is a blended finance product that addresses the market gap for affordable finance for experienced local agricultural stakeholders.

From there, I went to a private dinner at the Seehof organised by my good friend Toby Heaps of Corporate Knights (“The Company for Clean Capitalism”) and PRIME, the Principles for Responsible Management Education which focused on ‘How Business Schools can get us to a Sustainable Future.’ Toby has created an index of business schools MBA’s based on [sustainability rankings](#) and it’s good to see Exeter University in the UK receive an almost perfect score. I sat next to François Ortalo-Magné, the Dean of the London Business School and opposite Steve Waygood, the Chief Responsible Investment Officer for Aviva Investors, who spoke about the importance of business schools addressing sustainability in their programmes. This is surely a logical step to embed this in business leaders’ thinking at the earliest opportunity.

This left me just enough time to head back to the Belvedere to gate crash another dinner, “The Club of Davos: Africa’s Sustainable Heart” organised by the (ever) exuberant and host, Paul Clements-Hunt of the Blended Capital Group. With the topic of “Food Security and Nutrition for an Evergreen Sahel”, guests included Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi UNCTAD, I sat next to Remi Hemeryck, the Executive Director of one of my favourite charities, [SOS Sahel International](#) - who are working hard to hold back the African desert from encroachment. Also attending was my old friend Phil Riddell, a fellow director with me of [Indo African Agricultural Capital](#) (someone I’ve a special connection to as he funded my Agricultural Economics master degree at Wye College some thirty years ago). My forfeit for turning up already well refreshed to his dinner, was Paul’s instruction to address the room with an impromptu speech. My recall of this isn’t perfect, but I do, however, remember insulting one of the other guests for not remembering meeting me the year previous (thankfully an American who took this joke well). Paul always organises an excellent and intimate dinner at Davos and if he is reading this, thank you. I promise you when the occasion arises and a forfeit is required, I shall return the compliment.

## REFRESHED

Yes, in a week focused on sustainable food systems, I did eat twice. Reinvigorated by Paul’s dinner, I was able to go through the Belvedere’s end of evening party with its live band and obligatory dancing. There, I was happy to see [Jo Confino](#), Huffington Post’s executive editor, Impact & Innovation throwing some great moves on the dance floor. A hot evening in a cold town, my need for water was satiated by the long line of iced, full glasses waiting on the bar. Assuming this was natural, instead my swig engaged the taste of vodka and tonics. An hour later, I did the same thing all over again: it still wasn’t water. Thank goodness a taxi was booked, as at 2am finding transport involves persistence and funds. In Davos, a 15 minute journey on Uber is well over £130.

## INSPIRING AND MOTIVATING

[Mission2020](#) was established by Christiana Figueres, previously Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and I attended a private dinner at the “Chalet at the Top of the Mountain”. This was to discuss how we can reach the 2020 milestones, improve global infrastructure and deliver on the SDGs. Christiana gave an inspirational speech on how, with determined effort, the global economy can bend down the emissions curve and avoid the worst effects of climate change. Over drinks I was pleased to catch up with [Ion Yedigarglu](#) who has been Managing Partner at Capricorn Investment Group and an early investor in iconic technology companies Tesla and SpaceX. I also reconnected with Rick Needham, the Energy investment specialist at [TPG Rise Fund](#), who I first met at SoCap in San Francisco. TPG Rise has been exploring the area of how to scale energy access

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in the developing world. This dinner was terrific, as investors across the spectrum are inspired to rise to the challenge of financing the clean energy revolution.

The evening was somewhat marred by a banker giving the room the benefit of his views on why we should develop the Arctic – including selling us his ‘ethical charter’ that would allow us to develop its vast resources ‘sustainably’. As my head was reacting to this slowly, I found myself rising from the head of one of the tables and leaving the room. It was my heart instructing my legs to go, as I couldn’t bear listening to it any longer. I hoped no one noticed though; later I found out plenty did.

On the return from the Chalet down the steep Davos Funicular railway, it was great to catch up with Lord Nick Stern, where we discussed how much progress has been made on climate risk since the intervention of Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney in the creation of the [Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosures](#) whose convening I was privileged to present to the previous year. Some may have heard the Governor on Radio 4 this week speaking on the topic, live from Davos.

## BLOCKCHAIN AND BUSINESS

During the day, I visited ‘[BlockChain Central](#)’ (another whole parallel Davos, all on this one topic alone) and saw a fascinating panel discussion on “Agriculture, Water, Supply Chain and the Environment” and listen to my good friend (and member of the Carbon Tracker Advisory Board) Jemma Green debate. As well as being Mayor of the City of Perth in Australia, Jemma (ex JP Morgan’s sustainability champion) is Chair of ‘[Power Ledger](#)’ - who’d raised A\$34m in an ‘Initial Coin Offering’ to allow for Crowd-funding of renewable energy assets on the blockchain. This illuminating conversation started with me knowing nothing about what this actually means. I left it with a small marginal improvement in that understanding. However, if this means that citizens can access and trade their individual clean energy power or sell clean energy to their neighbour, then let’s bring that on.

My last invitation to dinner at Davos was perhaps the most inspiring, it was a meeting of [We Mean Business](#), a group dedicated to mobilising business to tackle climate change along with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Entitled ‘Accelerating the Zero Emission Mobility Revolution’ we heard from the CEO of IKEA about their commitment to put electric vehicle charging points in every one of their global stores, as well as to buy only electric vehicles for business use. This is part of a new group of CEOs who’ve signed up to EV 100 organised by the [Climate Group](#). We also heard from senior management at Renault and of course, Tesla, about how the revolution towards low emission, clean electric vehicles is accelerating. I sat next to the fascinating Jeremy Oppenheim, founder of Systemiq and originator of the [Energy Transitions Commission](#) and again, Jo Confino from the Huffington Post, who did a great job as moderator.

In Davos, they say everyone is equal for a week. Overcome the issue of ‘what to wear’ and join everyone else in combining smart business suits with clunky snowboots; furry hats with leather briefcases. And icy it was. I nearly fell into George Osborne. Or do you want to tap on the shoulder of Lord Mandelson, Ivan Glasenberg or Lakshmi Mittal at the Belvedere? Don’t hold back. Never got over the Glazer’s taking over control of Manchester United? Go ask them directly.

My apartment host for the week stopped me mid conversation so he could go over to door-stop Bill Gates. Not that they knew each other; he didn’t want to miss his chance of giving Gates the ‘three minute helicopter pitch’ about, yes, we must be used to this now: how blockchain is going to save the planet. I’m not sure if Bill Gates minded, because if you aren’t going to get door-stopped by aspirant visionaries at some point in Davos, why come. And that was for me, Davos.

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