

ATAFOM

Education For Integration - Learning Without Borders



Up Close – Exclusive Interview with

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold

Dean of the Faculty of Technology
ATAFOM University International

40 | **June**
ISSUE | **2026**

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ATAFOM UNIVERSITY
EXTERNAL NEWSLETTER

LEADERSHIP • INNOVATION • INTEGRATION • IMPACT

TABLE OF
CONTENTS



01



ATAFOM UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL – EDITORIAL REPORT & PERSPECTIVE

THE ROLE OF TOKENIZATION IN STO/IPO CAPITAL RAISING: UNLOCKING NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN 2026



06



ŞAKIR YAVUZ

THE 15TH AFRICAN LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE PERSON OF THE YEAR – POTY 2026 “INNOVATION IN EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT AND NARRATIVE OWNERSHIP”



11



CELEBRATIONS & GLOBAL DAYS



12



ATAFOM UNIVERSITY COURSE OFFERINGS FIRST SEMESTER
// WINTER SEMESTER 2026/27 ATAFOM UNIVERSITY



17



PRESIDENT’S QUOTE OF THE MONTH



19



ATAFOM UNIVERSITY

UP CLOSE WITH ASSOC. PROF. TINO HEROLD
DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY



24



THINK PIECE

LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY
RETHINKING EDUCATION AS A CATALYST FOR EMPOWERMENT AND NARRATIVE OWNERSHIP



28



ALUMNI



29



COMASOFT AND AI

AI AND THE DESIGN OF COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL BUSINESS PROCESSES



33



**ATAFOM UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL
OFFICE OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**





ATAFOM UNIVERSITY EXTERNAL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 40 | JUNE 2026

THE ROLE OF TOKENIZATION IN STO/IPO CAPITAL RAISING: UNLOCKING NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN 2026

Tokenization is redefining how capital is raised, accessed, and managed. As STOs and IPOs evolve, digital assets are creating new pathways for investors, businesses, and global markets.



GLOBAL ACCESS
Expanding investment opportunities worldwide



TRANSPARENCY & TRUST
Blockchain ensures security, compliance and confidence



EFFICIENCY & LIQUIDITY
Tokenized assets improve liquidity and reduce costs



INCLUSIVE GROWTH
Democratizing finance and enabling sustainable growth



EXPERT INSIGHTS
Thought leadership on the future of capital markets



INDUSTRY ANALYSIS
Trends, opportunities and the road ahead for STOs & IPOs



INNOVATION
How technology is shaping the future of finance



STUDENT FOCUS
Empowering students for careers in the digital economy

**ONE ATAFOM.
ONE WORLD.
ONE EDUCATION.
ONE FUTURE.**

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At ATAFOM University International’s Faculty of Initial Public Offering, we prepare future finance leaders to harness every tool in the modern capital formation toolkit — including the transformative power of blockchain and tokenization. As STO/IPO companies seek efficient ways to raise capital, build liquidity, and position for eventual IPO or strategic exit, tokenization has emerged as a game-changing innovation. By converting equity, fund interests, or other assets into digital tokens on a blockchain, companies can access global investors, enable fractional ownership, and introduce new levels of transparency and efficiency.

In 2026, tokenization is moving from experimental pilots to production-scale applications, bridging traditional private markets with decentralized finance (DeFi) and offering STO/IPO companies powerful alternatives or complements to conventional venture rounds and IPO preparations.



UNDERSTANDING TOKENIZATION IN THE PREIPO CONTEXT

Tokenization involves representing ownership rights such as shares in a private company, fund interests, or future economic exposure as digital tokens on a blockchain. These security tokens (often issued via Security Token Offerings or structured through SPVs for compliance) can provide investors with fractional stakes, potential secondary market liquidity, and real-time visibility into ownership via immutable ledgers.

For STO/IPO companies, this means raising capital without solely relying on traditional venture capital syndicates, angel networks, or private equity funds. Tokenized structures allow startups to:

- **Reach a broader, more diverse investor base, including retail participants and international investors who were previously excluded by high minimums or accreditation barriers.**
- **Lower fundraising costs by automating cap table management, investor onboarding, and distributions through smart contracts.**
- **Create early liquidity options for employees, early backers, and investors through secondary trading on compliant platforms.**

Platforms are already enabling tokenized exposure to high-profile STO/IPO names through SPV structures that maintain legal ownership of underlying equity while delivering blockchain benefits.

KEY BENEFITS OF TOKENIZATION FOR STO/IPO CAPITAL RAISING

Tokenization addresses several longstanding pain points in private market fundraising

- **Fractional Ownership and Democratized Access**

High-valuation unicorns become accessible with low entry thresholds (sometimes as low as tens of dollars), expanding the potential capital pool significantly.

- **Enhanced Liquidity**

Unlike traditional locked-up private equity, tokenized interests can trade on secondary markets or permissioned exchanges, providing earlier exit opportunities and better price discovery.

- **Global Reach and 24/7 Operations**

Blockchain enables borderless participation with near real-time settlement, reducing reliance on traditional market hours and intermediaries.

- **Transparency and Efficiency**

Immutable records improve governance, reduce disputes over ownership, and streamline compliance reporting. AI integration further accelerates due diligence and investor matching.

- **Cost and Speed Advantages**

Fundraising timelines and legal/administrative expenses can be meaningfully reduced compared to conventional rounds, allowing founders to focus more on growth.

These advantages make tokenization particularly appealing for late-stage PreIPO companies looking to scale before a public listing or as a parallel strategy alongside traditional paths.

TRENDS SHAPING TOKENIZATION IN STO/IPO MARKETS IN 2026

The ecosystem is maturing rapidly:

- **Institutional and TradFi Adoption**

Major players are integrating tokenized products, with growing interest in private equity fund tokenization and STO/IPO equity exposure. Exchanges and brokers are exploring or launching dedicated venues for tokenized securities.

- **Regulatory Progress and Compliance Focus**

Structured offerings using SPVs, digital identity verification, and blockchain-enabled KYC/AML tools are helping navigate evolving global regulations while maintaining investor protections.

- **Real-World Asset (RWA) Momentum**

Tokenized RWAs have seen explosive growth, with broader applications extending into private markets and equity-like instruments. This convergence supports hybrid models that blend TradFi compliance with DeFi composability.

- **Platform Innovation**

New solutions are offering tokenized STO/IPO access, AI-powered screening of opportunities, and secondary liquidity mechanisms, making the process more accessible and efficient.

While challenges remain — including regulatory uncertainty in some jurisdictions, technology infrastructure requirements, market volatility, and the need for robust custody and governance — the trajectory is clear: tokenization is becoming a strategic tool rather than a niche experiment.

THE ROLE OF TOKENIZATION IN STO/IPO CAPITAL RAISING

WHY ISSUERS AND INVESTORS ARE EMBRACING TOKENIZATION

- ✓ Broader Capital Formation Opportunities
- ✓ Enhanced Transparency Through Blockchain
- ✓ Access to Alternative Asset Classes
- ✓ More Efficient Capital Deployment

Tokenization is redefining how capital is raised, accessed, and managed. As STOs and IPOs evolve, digital assets are creating new pathways for investors, businesses, and global markets.



MODERNIZING CAPITAL FORMATION

Tokenization brings issuers and investors together to unlock greater efficiency, access, and better investment outcomes.



POWERED BY TOKENIZATION

- ⌚ Time Compression
- 🛡️ Embedded Compliance
- 🌐 Global Distribution
- 💧 Enhanced Liquidity
- 📄 Fractional Ownership
- 🕒 Real-Time Transparency

ENHANCING ACCESS & OPPORTUNITIES

- 📈 Positioning for Superior Risk-Adjusted Returns
- 🔗 Reduced Portfolio Correlation
- 📊 Increased Diversification
- ⌚ Shorter Capital Formation Cycles
- 💎 Access to Alternative Assets
- 🌐 Borderless Investment Opportunities

WHY TOKENIZATION IS RESHAPING CAPITAL MARKETS

<p>GLOBAL MARKET POTENTIAL \$16T+ Projected value of tokenized assets by 2030* <small>(Boston Consulting Group)</small></p>	<p>COST EFFICIENCY 40-60% Reduction in issuance and settlement costs</p>	<p>FASTER SETTLEMENT T+0 / T+1 From days to minutes with blockchain</p>	<p>GREATER ACCESS 24/7 Global investor access to digital assets</p>	<p>ENHANCED TRANSPARENCY 100% Real-time, verifiable on-chain records</p>
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ELEVATING THE CAPITAL FORMATION PROCESS

Tokenization modernizes capital formation by broadening investor participation, embedding compliance, enabling programmable ownership, reducing operational friction, enhancing transparency, and expanding access to traditionally illiquid asset classes.

DEFINING STO & IPO IN THE CONTEXT OF TOKENIZATION



Security Token Offering (STO)
A digitally native capital raising mechanism utilizing blockchain-based securities to improve accessibility, transparency, transferability, and operational efficiency.



Initial Public Offering (IPO)
A traditional public offering that may be enhanced through tokenization, facilitating digital distribution, streamlined settlement, and broader investor participation.

“Tokenization is more than a technological innovation—it represents an evolution in how capital is formed, governed, and exchanged.”

— ATAFOM RESEARCH & INNOVATION COUNCIL



KEY BENEFITS FOR STOS & IPOS

- WIDER INVESTOR BASE**
Access to global investors beyond geographical and institutional barriers.
- LIQUIDITY & FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP**
Increase liquidity and enable fractional ownership of high-value assets.
- REGULATORY ALIGNMENT**
Built-in compliance through smart contracts and KYC/AML integration.
- INNOVATION & COMPETITIVENESS**
Future-ready businesses attract capital and strengthen market position.

THE FUTURE OF CAPITAL FORMATION

- 🔥 Increasing institutional participation in digital assets
- 🔥 Convergence of AI, Blockchain, and RegTech
- 🔥 Evolution toward programmable securities
- 🔥 New models of governance and shareholder engagement
- 🔥 Sustainable and inclusive global capital markets

KEY ENABLERS OF SUCCESS

<p>STRONG REGULATION Clear legal frameworks build trust and ensure market integrity.</p>	<p>TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE Scalable blockchain platforms enable seamless tokenization.</p>	<p>MARKET EDUCATION Awareness and knowledge empower investors and businesses.</p>	<p>LIQUIDITY INFRASTRUCTURE Automated Market Makers (AMMs), staking, and liquidity pools expand access to traditionally illiquid asset classes.</p>	<p>ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS Multi-stakeholder collaboration accelerates adoption and market maturity.</p>
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* Source: Boston Consulting Group (BCG) – The Tokenization Opportunity, 2023.

WHY TOKENIZATION MATTERS FOR ATAFOM STUDENTS AND STO/IPO PROFESSIONALS

In our curriculum, tokenization is not treated as a standalone technology but as an integral part of modern capital markets strategy. Students learn how to evaluate tokenized offerings alongside traditional IPO pathways, conduct due diligence on blockchain-based structures, understand smart contract mechanics, navigate securities regulations, and model the impact of fractional ownership and secondary liquidity on valuation and exit planning.

Whether founding a startup, advising STO/IPO clients, or working in investment banking or private equity, mastering tokenization equips you to design innovative capital structures that attract diverse investors while preparing for long-term public market success.

Prof. David Grzan, Dean of the Faculty of Initial Public Offering, states: “Our programs go beyond theory. We equip students to thrive in the real world—building teams, securing funding through both traditional and tokenized channels, leveraging transformative technologies like blockchain and AI, and making strategic decisions that position STO/IPO companies for optimal growth and liquidity.”

PREPARE FOR THE TOKENIZED FUTURE OF CAPITAL RAISING

The convergence of tokenization with STO/IPO strategies is expanding the capital formation landscape dramatically. With tokenized real-world assets gaining traction and platforms enabling compliant STO/IPO exposure, the opportunities for efficient, inclusive fundraising have never been greater.

Join our **Bachelor of Science in STO/IPO (B.Sc.), 3-, 6-, or 9-month certification** courses, or the **One-Year Diploma** to gain hands-on expertise in tokenization, blockchain applications, due diligence, transaction support, IPO readiness, and the full spectrum of alternative investments.

Join ATAFOM University International and become part of the future of finance. STO/IPO, IPO, tokenization, capital markets innovation, and alternative investments converge here.

ATAFOM Makes It Possible!

Our future needs a stable and strong economy. A strong and stable economy requires highly educated economists and finance professionals.

ATAFOM Makes It Possible by producing highly educated leaders in capital markets.

Ready to explore how tokenization is reshaping PreIPO capital raising and the broader financial landscape? Explore our programs today at the Faculty of Initial Public Offering.

Sources & Further Reading (for credibility and deeper exploration):

- **Real World Asset Tokenization: Trends and Outlook for 2026 (Investax.io)**
- **Major Trends in Tokenization (Coinbase Research)**
- **2026 Trends Shaping Investment Products (BlackRock)**
- **Tokenization Trends for 2026 (various industry reports on NYSE, Nasdaq, and RWA platforms)**



Prof. David Grzan

Vice Rector

Dean

Faculty of Initial Public Offering

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Reflections from Accra: A Personal Experience at the POTY 2026 Awards

The African Leadership Persons of the Year (POTY) Awards 2026 in Accra, Ghana, was a significant event for leaders and changemakers, and the author found attending it and witnessing the recognition of President Şakir Yavuz to be a privileged and memorable professional experience.

As an Art Director, I was struck by President Yavuz's authenticity and humility at the POTY Awards, noting his approachable and attentive engagement with diverse attendees despite the prestigious environment.

I observed President Yavuz's impressive ability to connect with people from various backgrounds, consistently emphasizing bridge-building and creating opportunities beyond borders in discussions about education, innovation, entrepreneurship, and international cooperation.

President Yavuz's recognition at the POTY Awards reflected his dedication and visionary leadership, with his message focusing on leadership as a means of creating value, empowering others, and contributing positively to society, a proud moment for ATAFOM University International.

It became evident that President Yavuz is highly respected in international leadership circles, with delegates and guests expressing admiration for his commitment to education, global cooperation, and sustainable development, indicating his influence extends beyond institutional achievements.

I, involved in ATAFOM's visual narratives, found inspiration in how President Yavuz's actions and character at the event clearly embodied the institution's values of Education for Integration, international collaboration, innovation, and social responsibility.

The POTY 2026 Awards will be a memorable chapter for ATAFOM, and I am grateful to have experienced this powerful lesson in leadership, responsibility, and making a meaningful difference alongside an inspiring leader.



Afetormashie Prosper

Head of Graphic Design Department.
ATAFOM University International

ŞAKIR YAVUZ - THE 15TH AFRICAN LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE PERSON OF THE YEAR - POTY 2026

“INNOVATION IN EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT AND NARRATIVE OWNERSHIP.”





AFRICAN LEADERSHIP PERSONS OF THE YEAR

...Rewarding Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Development in Africa

African Leadership Magazine



AFRICAN LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATION EVENTS

CONNECT
INSPIRE
CELEBRATE



LEADERSHIP. INNOVATION. IMPACT.

REWARDING EXCELLENCE, SHAPING AFRICA'S FUTURE.

The recognition received by Şakir Yavuz at the African Leadership Magazine Persons of the Year Awards 2026 marks a significant milestone in a professional journey shaped by dedication, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to advancing international education. Held in Accra, Ghana, the event brought together global leaders and influential figures whose work has contributed meaningfully to development, leadership, and international cooperation.

For President Yavuz, this recognition carries particular importance, as it represents his 15th international award. This milestone reflects not only a distinguished personal achievement but also the global impact of the initiatives he has led through ATAFOM University International. Each recognition throughout his career has been a testament to a broader vision—one that views education as a powerful instrument for social progress, cultural understanding, and international collaboration.

The significance of the fifteenth award lies not only in the number itself but also in what it symbolizes. It represents years of sustained commitment to a mission that places education at the heart of global development. In an increasingly interconnected world, access to quality education and opportunities for academic cooperation have become essential elements of sustainable progress. The work led by President Yavuz directly contributes to these goals by fostering international partnerships and encouraging inclusive educational initiatives.

Under his leadership, ATAFOM University International has steadily expanded its global reach. The institution has cultivated relationships with universities, academic organizations, and research institutions from various regions of the world. These collaborations have created opportunities for joint academic projects, conferences, seminars, and research initiatives that enrich the global educational landscape.

One of the defining characteristics of President Yavuz's leadership is his emphasis on building bridges between educational communities. Rather than focusing solely on institutional growth, he has consistently promoted cooperation and shared learning as fundamental principles of international education. By encouraging partnerships between institutions from different cultural and academic traditions, ATAFOM has helped create a network that supports dialogue, innovation, and mutual understanding.

The recognition received at the African Leadership Magazine Persons of the Year Awards highlights the broader influence of President Yavuz's work in this context. International leadership platforms such as the POTY Awards celebrate individuals whose contributions extend beyond national boundaries and whose initiatives promote collaboration on a global scale.

In addition to expanding institutional partnerships, ATAFOM under President Yavuz's guidance has focused on encouraging academic dialogue among scholars and professionals from diverse backgrounds. Conferences, academic forums, and international events organized or supported by ATAFOM provide opportunities for experts to exchange ideas and explore new avenues of cooperation.

President Yavuz's leadership philosophy places particular emphasis on "education as a catalyst for positive change". By promoting inclusive educational opportunities and encouraging global academic engagement, he seeks to empower individuals and institutions to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to the broader international society.

This vision aligns closely with contemporary discussions about the role of higher education in shaping the future. Universities today are increasingly expected not only to provide academic instruction but also to serve as platforms for leadership development, innovation, and global cooperation. Through ATAFOM's initiatives, President Yavuz has contributed to advancing this broader understanding of the role of education in society.



For the ATAFOM community, this achievement is a source of pride and motivation. Faculty members, academic partners, and collaborators around the world share in the success represented by this recognition. Their collective efforts contribute to the growth and impact of the institution's mission.

At the same time, the award encourages further progress. As international cooperation becomes increasingly important in addressing global challenges, institutions like ATAFOM play an essential role in facilitating dialogue and collaboration between educational communities.

Looking ahead, the milestone reached by President Yavuz represents not the culmination of a journey but rather a point of reflection and renewed determination. The values that have guided his leadership—cooperation, accessibility, and international engagement—remain central to ATAFOM's future initiatives.

The recognition at the African Leadership Magazine Persons of the Year Awards 2026 therefore stands as an affirmation of the transformative potential of education and the power of visionary leadership to bring institutions and communities together.

As ATAFOM University International continues to develop new programs, partnerships, and opportunities for collaboration, the fifteenth international award serves as a reminder of how sustained commitment and a clear vision can create lasting global impact.



Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday ~ Doğum gününüz kutlu olsun ~ Alles Gute zum Geburtstag ~ Joyeux anniversaire ~ Feliz cumpleaños ~ जन्मदिनि मुबारक हो ~ С днём рождения ~ ديعس داليم ديع

Dear Prof. Razi Safarov!

On behalf of ATAFOM University International, we are delighted to extend our warmest congratulations to you on your special day.

We celebrate not only your birthday, but also your valuable contributions as a Phytotherapist and Lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine. Your dedication to advancing knowledge in the field of healthcare, combined with your commitment to education, reflects the very spirit of ATAFOM—excellence, innovation, and global responsibility.

Through your expertise and passion, you continue to inspire students, colleagues, and the wider academic community, contributing to the development of holistic and forward-thinking approaches in modern medicine.

We wish you a year filled with:

continued success in your academic and professional journey
good health and personal fulfillment
new opportunities for growth and impactful achievements

May your work continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others and in the advancement of healthcare globally.

With our highest regards and best wishes,

EDUCATION FOR INTEGRATION

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/27

ATAFOM UNIVERSITY COURSE OFFERINGS

BACHELOR COURSE OFFERINGS

FIRST SEMESTER // WINTER SEMESTER 2026/27



Welcome to ATAFOM University International

Empowering Global Minds. Building a United Future.



At ATAFOM University International, we believe that true education is a journey that connects hearts, minds, and cultures. More than just academics, we offer an experience that inspires **unity**, fosters **innovation**, and cultivates future **global leaders**.



Guided by the visionary leadership of Şakir Yavuz, our university lives by the motto "**Education for Integration**." We're creating a worldwide community where students from every background come together to learn, grow, and transform their potential into purpose.



Our online classrooms are vibrant hubs of **diversity**, where bold ideas are celebrated, global perspectives are shared, and lifelong friendships begin. Whether you're just starting your academic path, upskilling for career advancement, or seeking intellectual enrichment, ATAFOM offers programs designed for today's world—and tomorrow's challenges.



Here, education is more than textbooks and lectures. It's a gateway to meaningful impact in an interconnected world. Our commitment to **excellence**, **innovation**, and **cultural understanding** shapes not only careers but character.



Join ATAFOM University International—where learning has no borders, and your global journey begins.

Discover the programs that are redefining international education.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/27

BACHELOR COURSE OFFERINGS FIRST SEMESTER // WINTER SEMESTER 2026/27

- Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communications (B.A.) at the Faculty of Arts
- Bachelor of Arts in International Business Development (B.A.) at the Faculty of Economics
- Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (B.Sc.- IT) at the Faculty of Technology
- Bachelor of Science in STO/ IPO (B.Sc.) at the Faculty of Initial Public Offering



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15 IT CERTIFICATION COURSE OFFERINGS



Basics of Python



Basics of AutoCAD



Basics of Graphics Designing



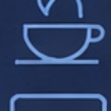
Basics of Backend Development (Using Django)



Basics of Blockchain



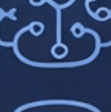
Basics of Data Analysis



Basics of Java



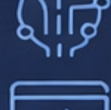
Frontend Development - Level One: Beginner



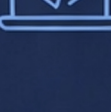
Frontend Development - Level Two: Intermediate



Frontend Development - Level Three: Advanced



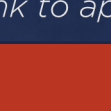
Frontend Development - Level Four: Expert



Database and SQL



Generative AI for Everyone



Deep Learning and Neural Networks

Basics of Software Engineering Principles

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ATAFOM LANGUAGE ACADEMY COURSE OFFERINGS

English language courses are available at ATAFOM Language Academy, with options for different proficiency levels:

- ALA-A0 as Pre ALA-A1: Starter
- ALA-A1: Beginner Level
- ALA-A2: Elementary Level
- ALA-B1: Pre-Intermediate Level
- ALA-B2: Intermediate Level
- ALA-C1: Upper-Intermediate Level
- ALA-C2: Advanced Level
- ALA-BE I: B2 Business English I (Requires minimum language level of ALC B2)
- ALA-BE II: C1 Business English II (Requires minimum language level of ALC-C1)
- ALA-BE III: C2 Business English III (Requires minimum language level of ALC-C2)
- ALA-IT English

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FACULTY OF INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING CERTIFICATION COURSE OFFERINGS:

The Faculty of Initial Public Offering at ATAFOM University International brings you multiple PrelIPO certification programs along with the Bachelor of Science in STO/IPO (B.Sc.).

The certification programs begin every month. Find your best match here -

3-month STO/IPO certification course

6-month STO/IPO certification course

9-month STO/IPO certification course

One-year diploma course

At ATAFOM University International, we are committed to providing an education that blends modern innovation with academic excellence. Our goal is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience needed to succeed in today's fast-changing world.

With a strong emphasis on global perspectives and real-world learning, we ensure that our students are not only prepared for their careers but also for leadership in an interconnected society.

Join a university where education knows no boundaries and opportunities are limitless. Your future starts here!

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Link to apply: <https://atafom.university/apply-to-atafom2/>



Şakir Yavuz
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT
ATAFOM University International

“THE SUCCESS OF EVERY ACTION BEGINS IN THE HEAD.”

Helped him pave a way to create the university offering an inclusive education. He is firmly convinced that the children of this world with different cultural backgrounds and countries of origin as well as languages should have the same right to education. He has set himself the task of giving young people access to university education of the highest international quality and with equal opportunities, in the conviction that success requires permanent concentration, strong motivation and extreme commitment.

At ATAFOM University International, “Education for Integration” is developed, taught and lived. The team of internationally renowned professional teachers and experienced staff at ATAFOM University International will meet the highest international standards and will do everything possible to meet and exceed all of our students’ expectations and educational goals as they embark on undergraduate studies or learn the English language when they enroll in ATAFOM Language Academy.

The digital innovation and knowledge campus of ATAFOM University International - ConiaSoft Online Campus, which accommodates everyone who is willing to learn, makes it possible to create educational bridges between all continents.



PRESIDENT'S QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“ Leadership is not tested in moments of comfort, but in moments of **global consequence**. In a world defined by **interdependence**, true leadership requires the courage to **take responsibility beyond borders**, to **act with purpose** beyond self-interest, and to **build futures that include those** who have long been left behind. The leaders of tomorrow **will not be remembered** for what they **achieved alone**—but for what they **enabled humanity to achieve together**. ”

— **Şakir Yavuz**
President and Founder
ATAFOM University International



**Up Close with
Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold
Dean
Faculty of Technology
ATAFOM University International**



A. INTRODUCTION – PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

ATAFOM Newsletter: What originally inspired you to pursue technology and digital transformation?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Technology has fascinated me from an early stage because of its ability to solve problems while simultaneously creating new opportunities for individuals, organisations, and entire societies. My professional journey began with a strong technical and commercial foundation, later expanding into international projects involving digitalisation, infrastructure, energy, and strategic development. What has consistently inspired me is the intersection between technology, business, and societal advancement. For me, digital transformation is not merely about software or systems; it represents the transformation of processes, education, communication, and opportunity itself.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: Which technological developments have most strongly influenced your work?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *The most transformative developments have been cloud technologies, artificial intelligence, global platform economies, and data-driven decision-making processes. Today, we are additionally witnessing the transition towards Agentic AI, autonomous systems, and quantum computing. Equally significant has been the evolution of modern datacentre architectures and global digital infrastructures, particularly within international and educational innovation environments.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: What role do you believe technology plays today in education and society?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Technology has become a fundamental pillar of societal participation. In the future, meaningful education without technological competence will scarcely be possible. At the same time, technology should never become an end in itself. It must serve to foster integration, accessibility, and empowerment. Universities therefore carry a particular responsibility to combine technological innovation with ethical thinking, social responsibility, and international collaboration.*

B. TECHNOLOGY TODAY – TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

ATAFOM Newsletter: Which three technological developments will most significantly shape the next five years?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Firstly, artificial intelligence and Agentic AI. Secondly, quantum computing and quantum communication. Thirdly, intelligent digital infrastructures, including datacentres, cybersecurity, edge computing, and global digital platforms. These fields will fundamentally transform business, education, public administration, and international cooperation.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: Where do you currently see the greatest misunderstandings or misdirections within the technology sector?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Many individuals still perceive technology as an isolated IT-related discipline. In reality, technology is reshaping entire value chains and societal structures. Another misconception is the belief that artificial intelligence will replace human capability entirely. In practice, the most successful individuals and organisations will be those capable of intelligently combining human creativity, strategic thinking, and AI-driven systems. Furthermore, the significance of data sovereignty, cybersecurity, and resilient digital infrastructure continues to be underestimated.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: Which competencies do students most frequently lack today in relation to technology?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Students often lack systems thinking, problem-solving capability, and the ability to understand technology from an interdisciplinary perspective. Many learn individual tools without understanding the broader strategic context. In the future, competencies in data analytics, AI application, platform economics, cybersecurity, communication, and international collaboration will become increasingly essential.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: How is artificial intelligence changing the role of universities?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Artificial intelligence is fundamentally transforming universities. Knowledge is now universally accessible at unprecedented speed. Consequently, the role of higher education institutions will shift from the mere transmission of information towards the development of analytical capability, critical thinking, innovation capacity, and ethical responsibility. Universities are evolving into innovation platforms, research ecosystems, and technology hubs.*

C. TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION – THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

ATAFOM Newsletter: How will higher education fundamentally change through technology?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Higher education will become more flexible, international, and practice-oriented. Traditional rigid educational structures will increasingly be replaced by hybrid learning models, digital platforms, project-based learning, and global academic partnerships. Students will participate more directly in real-world innovation projects alongside industry, research institutions, and international collaborators.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: Which new study formats or learning models will become increasingly important?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Micro-degrees, modular study programmes, AI-supported learning systems, virtual laboratories, and internationally hybrid academic models will experience substantial growth. Lifelong learning and professionally integrated technology programmes will also become increasingly important. Education will become more continuous, adaptive, and individualised.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: What role do AI, data literacy, platform economies, and interdisciplinarity play in educating the next generation?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold:

- *Artificial Intelligence will become a fundamental professional competency across nearly all sectors.*
- *Data literacy will become as essential as traditional literacy and numeracy.*
- *Platform economies are transforming business models, markets, and digital value creation.*
- *Interdisciplinarity will become indispensable, as technological challenges can no longer be solved within isolated disciplines.*

The next generation must not merely operate technology, but understand, shape, and apply it responsibly.

ATAFOM Newsletter: What does “Technology for Integration” mean to you?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *To me, Technology for Integration means using technology as a bridge between countries, cultures, educational systems, and economic opportunities. Technology should not divide societies; rather, it should create access, collaboration, and development. Particularly across Africa and emerging international markets, digital infrastructure has the potential to accelerate both societal integration and economic transformation on a significant scale.*

D. LEADERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF DEAN OF TECHNOLOGY

ATAFOM Newsletter: How would you strategically build a Faculty of Technology?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *A modern Faculty of Technology must be internationally oriented, research-driven, and closely connected with industry. This includes the establishment of advanced datacentre infrastructures, AI and quantum laboratories, international partnerships, and practice-oriented academic programmes. Equally important is a strong integration of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: Which degree programmes or academic areas would you prioritise?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold:

I would prioritise programmes in:

- *Artificial Intelligence and Agentic Systems*
- *Quantum Computing and Quantum Technologies*
- *Cybersecurity and Digital Infrastructure*
- *Data Science and Intelligent Analytics*
- *Smart Systems Engineering*
- *Digital Business and Platform Economies*
- *Cloud and Datacentre Architecture*

Particularly important is the integration of technology, business, and societal application.

ATAFOM Newsletter: How can a university connect technology with societal integration?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *By ensuring open access to education, fostering international partnerships, and developing practical innovation projects. Universities should not operate in isolation, but rather function as platforms for societal development. Technology must address real-world challenges in education, healthcare, administration, energy, and infrastructure.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: How would you strengthen the relationship between industry, research, and teaching?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Through joint innovation centres, industrial partnerships, collaborative research initiatives, and international technology hubs. Students should engage with real-world industry and research projects at an early stage of their studies. At the same time, universities must become more agile in responding to technological developments.*

E. OUTLOOK TOWARDS 2030

ATAFOM Newsletter: What will a typical technology student look like in 2030?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *The technology student of 2030 will be internationally connected, digitally fluent, interdisciplinary in outlook, and strongly project-oriented. Students will work alongside AI systems, coordinate global teams, and continuously develop new competencies. Future technology students will be less narrowly specialised and more globally focused problem-solvers.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: What role will global digital universities play by then?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Global digital universities will play a central role. Education will increasingly become location-independent, internationally connected, and technology-enabled. Nevertheless, personal interaction and collaborative research will remain important; consequently, hybrid models combining digital scalability with physical academic engagement are likely to dominate.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: What would personally constitute success for you as Dean of Technology after five years?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Success would mean establishing an internationally recognised faculty with advanced research and innovation centres, while enabling students to contribute successfully to global technology initiatives. Most importantly, I would consider it a success if graduates not only possess technical expertise, but also actively contribute to technological advancement and societal development.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: What should we ask you that we have not yet addressed?

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *Perhaps the most important question is this: how can we ensure that rapid technological innovation remains aligned with long-term societal responsibility? Technology evolves at extraordinary speed, yet sustainable progress requires values, education, collaboration, and trust. In my view, this represents one of the central responsibilities of modern universities.*

ATAFOM Newsletter: Please complete the following sentence:

“Education for Integration is for me...”

Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold: *“Education for Integration is, for me, the integration of knowledge, technology, and international collaboration in order to empower people to actively shape societal development and responsibly embrace global opportunities.*



Assoc. Prof. Tino Herold
Dean
Faculty of Technology
ATAFOM University International



THINK PIECE

Leadership and Global Responsibility in the 21st Century

Rethinking Education as a Catalyst
for Empowerment and Narrative
Ownership



RETHINKING EDUCATION AS A CATALYST FOR EMPOWERMENT AND NARRATIVE OWNERSHIP



In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, geopolitical complexity, and shifting societal dynamics, leadership is no longer confined to authority, position, or influence. It is increasingly defined by responsibility and global responsibility.

The recognition of Şakir Yavuz as the 15th African Leadership Magazine Person of the Year (POTY) 2026 under the theme “Innovation in Education as a Tool for Empowerment and Narrative Ownership” reflects a broader transformation in how leadership is understood and exercised in the modern world.

At its core, this recognition signals a paradigm shift: from leadership as control to leadership as enablement.

LEADERSHIP BEYOND BORDERS

Traditional leadership models were often shaped by national priorities, economic performance, or institutional success. However, the interconnected nature of today’s world demands a more expansive approach—one that transcends borders and acknowledges the shared challenges of humanity.

Şakir Yavuz’s work embodies this shift. His vision is not limited to building institutions but extends to creating platforms that connect people, cultures, and knowledge systems. Through ATAFOM University International, he has contributed to the emergence of a global educational ecosystem where access to learning is no longer restricted by geography.

This approach reflects a fundamental truth:
education is no longer a local asset—it is a global responsibility.

EDUCATION AS EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment begins with access—access to knowledge, to opportunity, and to participation in shaping the future. Yet access alone is not sufficient. The quality, relevance, and inclusivity of education determine its transformative power.

By promoting educational models that combine academic rigor with digital accessibility, leadership can create environments where individuals are not only recipients of knowledge but active contributors to global discourse. In this context, education becomes more than a system—it becomes an instrument of empowerment.

Şakir Yavuz’s approach demonstrates that when education is designed to be inclusive and globally connected, it enables individuals to move beyond structural limitations and participate meaningfully in economic, social, and intellectual development.

NARRATIVE OWNERSHIP IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

One of the most critical dimensions of modern leadership is the ability to shape narratives. For decades, global narratives—particularly in education and development—have often been defined by a limited number of voices.

The concept of narrative ownership challenges this imbalance.

It emphasizes the importance of enabling individuals and communities to define their own stories, perspectives, and futures. Education plays a decisive role in this process. It equips individuals with the intellectual tools to articulate their realities, challenge existing paradigms, and contribute to a more balanced global discourse.

Leadership, therefore, must not only provide access to education but also ensure that education fosters independent thinking, cultural confidence, and intellectual autonomy.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Global responsibility requires more than vision—it requires action. Leaders must create structures that:

- **Expand access to high-quality education**
- **Promote collaboration across cultures and institutions**
- **Integrate technology as a tool for inclusion rather than division**
- **Support the development of future leaders capable of addressing global challenges**

In this regard, leadership becomes an ongoing commitment to building systems that serve not only present needs but also future generations.

A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

The recognition of Şakir Yavuz at the POTY Awards 2026 represents more than an individual achievement. It highlights a leadership model that is increasingly relevant in the 21st century one that integrates education, technology, and global cooperation into a coherent vision of progress.

This model suggests that the future of leadership lies not in dominance but in connection; not in control but in empowerment; not in isolation but in collaboration.



CONCLUSION

As the world continues to evolve, the role of leadership will be measured not by its ability to maintain existing structures but by its capacity to transform them.

Education, when guided by a vision of integration and inclusion, becomes the most powerful tool for enabling this transformation.

The path forward is clear:

Leadership must empower.

Education must integrate.

And global responsibility must guide both.





SIX MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION: PUTTING MEDIA EDUCATION INTO PRACTICE

It has been over six months since I completed my Bachelor of Arts in Media Communications at ATAFOM University. While I am currently awaiting my final certification, the journey from student to media practitioner has already been both rewarding and transformative.

Before pursuing my studies, my understanding of media was largely centered on content creation. However, my university education opened my eyes to the broader dimensions of the industry, particularly the business and ethical aspects of media. These areas have become invaluable in shaping the way I approach my work today.

Since completing my degree, I have been applying the knowledge and skills gained throughout my studies in ways I never imagined. One of my proudest achievements has been establishing and running a production house. The practical film production techniques, professional work ethics, and communication skills I learned at university have played a significant role in hel

Edwin Mwanza

Social Media Department
ATAFOM University International



CONIASOFT AND AI





Artificial intelligence - AI - has evolved from a technological innovation to a fundamental force that shapes economic, social and institutional processes worldwide. The influence of AI application extends beyond individual organizations and has a systemic effect, sometimes indirectly, on global structures, decision making processes and power relations.

Against this background, AI is becoming not only a technological issue, but also a question of leadership and responsibility.

This means that decision-makers are faced with the task of designing and using AI in such a way that it not only promotes efficiency and innovation, but also ensures long-term stability, fairness and social trust.

LEADERSHIP IN THE AGE OF AI

Leadership in the context of AI means more than just the introduction of new technologies. It is about consciously designing framework conditions within which AI can work responsibly and be used.

Thus, central tasks are derived from modern leadership, such as:

- **Strategic embedding of AI in long-term organizational and social goals**
- **Taking responsibility for AI-powered decisions, even if they are automated**
- **Promoting transparency and trust towards employees, users and the public**
- **Creation of a value-based corporate culture that also critically reflects technological development**

Managers must not only understand AI, but also anticipate and actively manage its effects.

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY: IMPACT ACROSS BORDERS

AI systems rarely seem isolated. AI systems are part of globally networked infrastructures and also have cross-border effects on:

- **Labour markets and skill requirements**
- **Information flows and opinion-forming**
- **Access to resources and opportunities**
- **Distribution of power between organizations and states**

This results in a global responsibility that goes beyond national regulations and local areas of responsibility.



Organizations and leaders need to ask themselves and take into account when making decisions:

- **What impact does the use of AI have on different regions and societies?**
- **Does the use of AI increase or reduce existing inequalities?**
- **How can global standards for responsible AI be established?**

Global responsibility means not only pursuing local optimization, but also thinking about systemic effects.

RESPONSIBLE HANDLING OF RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The use of AI opens up enormous potential, but also entails risks that must be actively managed:

OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Increased efficiency and automation**
- **Improve decision quality through data-driven analytics**
- **Scalability of solutions across regions and systems**

RISKS:

- **Non-transparent decision-making processes**
- **Distortions and discrimination**
- **Security Risks and Abuse**
- **Dependencies on complex, hard-to control systems**

For AI introduction, leadership means making conscious considerations and setting clear priorities – not everything that is technologically possible should and must be implemented.

GOVERNANCE AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL

Effective leadership in the AI context requires robust governance structures. These are not an end in themselves, but a central instrument for the implementation of responsibility.

Important elements are:

- **Clear responsibilities** for developing, deploying, and controlling AI
- **Transparent decision-making processes** and documentation
- **Regular audits and evaluations**
- **Integrating ethical guidelines** into operational processes

Governance makes it possible to use AI not only efficiently, but also legitimately and trustworthily.

EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT AS A LEADERSHIP TASK

A central component of responsible leadership is the promotion of skills in dealing with AI. This includes:

- **Basic technical understanding** among the decision-makers
- **Interdisciplinary cooperation** between technology, management and law
- **Raising awareness of ethical issues**
- **Continuous training** in a rapidly changing environment

When introducing and using AI solutions, managers have a high responsibility not only to introduce technologies, but also to enable people in the area of influence of the new AI solution to use them critically, responsibly and competently.



AI AS A CONNECTING ELEMENT OF GLOBAL SYSTEMS

In increasingly complex and networked structures, AI can act as a coordinating element or be used in a targeted manner:

- **Integration of heterogeneous data sources**
- **Optimization of global processes**
- **Support in complex decision-making processes**

But the more AI acts as a connecting infrastructure, the greater the responsibility of those who shape and control it.

FIELDS OF ACTION FOR LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

For organizations and decision-makers, there are concrete fields of action:

- **Anchoring responsibility at the management level**
- **Development of clear guidelines for the use of AI in all application levels**
- **Consideration of global impacts in strategic local decisions**
- **Building transparent and auditable systems**
- **Investment in education and organizational culture**

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence is not only a technological development, but a global design factor. The use of AI requires a new understanding of leadership – an understanding that combines technological competence with ethical reflection and global responsibility.

Leadership and global responsibility are inextricably linked. Those who design AI also effectively shape social structures.

The central challenge is to reconcile the innovation of AI application with responsibility – and to use AI in such a way that it is not only efficient, but also fair, transparent and sustainable.



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“The success of every action
begins with the head.”

Şakir Yavuz

*Founder & President
ATAFOM University international*

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