

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP THROUGH MANAGEMENT EDUCATION



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CHALLENGE



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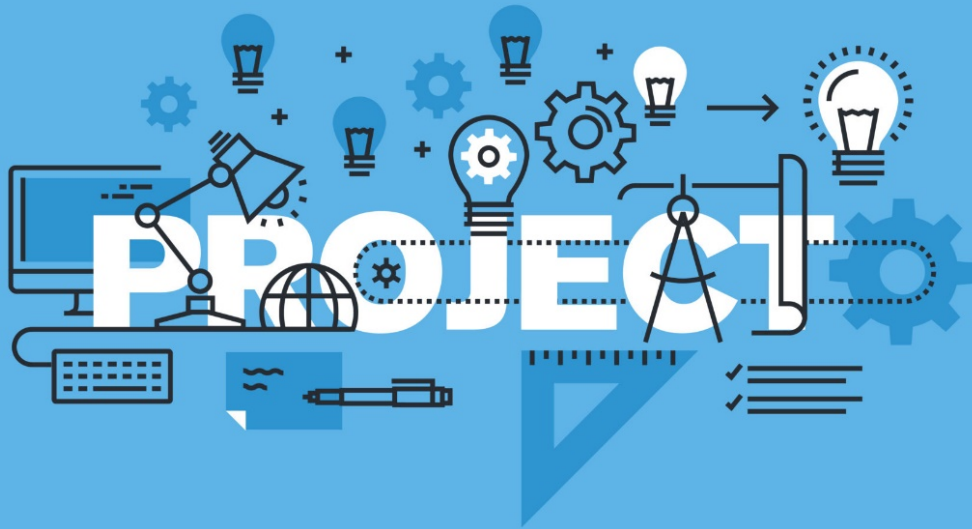
Business Schools play a prodigious role in shaping their students skills, mind-sets and attitudes, and in essence, creating the leaders of tomorrow – today. These leaders will one day be the most important change makers of business and even the broader society – for better or for worse. With this in mind, business schools all around the world should aim to provide business students of today with the understanding and ability to deal with pressing social challenges and deliver positive change already tomorrow.



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PRACTICE



One could say, that innovation is an integral part of IEDC’s DNA. In mid 80s a group of people in the former Yugoslavia realised that the country needs manager that can operate in the international business environment and soon afterword’s, in 1987, IEDC held its first General Management Program and soon afterwards an MBA Program – becoming the first business school in the broader region. This pursuit of innovation, connecting very much with one of the key educational pillars – the service to society – can be very clearly seen in the fields of ethics, CSR and sustainability.

Almost three decades ago, still in the times of the socialist self-management, IEDC decided to introduce ethics in its curriculum. It was far before business schools in other parts of the world. Unfortunately it was a period, when there were no professors of business ethics available. The first solution was to visit a Slovene bishop, who was known for dealing with ethical questions. He contributed very well concerning the basic issues until somebody in the audience asked him about specific dilemmas in business ethics and he honestly recognized that his knowledge on business ethics was not good enough to answer on these questions. After this experience, one of the IEDC professors with business experience specialized in the topic of business ethics, and soon afterwards, IEDC connected it with the issue of “corporate governance”.

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Since that time, IEDC stayed a forerunner in this field, and making important steps and hosting many conferences on the topic of CSR. In 2007, IEDC has founded the Slovenian branch of the UN Global Compact with the aim to help Slovenian companies realize strategic opportunities offered by sustainable and socially responsible practices, increasing, therefore, the overall competitiveness of Slovenian economy. From its beginnings, IEDC been one of the prominent members and contributors to the PRME initiative, which works for the integration of Sustainable Development Goals in management education, research and leadership globally. Joining the initiative, it was recognised as the only PRME Champion in the CEE region.

In 2010, about the time that IEDC launched its first PhD program, it also established the IEDC Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development which launched IEDC's work on sustainability.

The Network for Social Responsibility of Slovenia that serves as the meeting point of companies and other organizations to promote social responsibility, both within their companies and organizations, as well in the wider social space, was founded in 2011. The Network facilitates exchange of knowledge, innovation and good practice in corporate social responsibility, and raising awareness of the benefits that this brings on the level of the individual, organization and the society.



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In 2014, the EISEP Institute was founded with the aim of development in the fields of corporate compliance and ethics, as well as development of the compliance profession in Slovenia and the wider region.

IEDC immediately established close cooperation with both organizations and they have together developed two of the most important annual regional conferences on CSR, sustainability, ethics and compliance – the Annual Trends in CSR Conference and the Bled Compliance and Ethics Conference which has further evolved in 2019 to become one of the most important European event on compliance and ethics. An interesting indicator of the importance of such activities is the fact that over 60% of participants are returning to both of the conferences every year.

Slovenia, like many other countries, enjoys a number of forerunners in non-governmental and educational organisations, but unfortunately this is coupled with a relatively slow and laboriously process of transforming good ideas and intentions to laws and regulations in the fields of CSR, sustainability, ethics and compliance, which is why IEDC and its partners are increasingly working to improve this side as well.

An important step for IEDC and a sort of a synthesis of all the previous activities in these fields was the establishment of WISE - the World Institute for Sustainability and Ethics in Rising Economies. WISE aims to address the gap in the global efforts to propel sustainability and ethics to even-greater prominence and to further strengthen efforts for relevant research with the emphasis on rising economies which should no longer be followers, but rather change-makers. With support of two Slovene companies – Luka Koper and NLB, IEDC managed to found the Institute in 2018 and join in together other centres of excellence from Germany (CBS), South Africa and China (NIIM ZU) with partners from Brazil, India and Russia to join by the end of 2019. In this short period, the Institute has developed its research agenda and already initiated some research projects, mapped out a news CSR book series and is currently working on developing its first specialised executive education and other development programs. The Institute has also connected with the Slovene-German Chamber of Commerce.



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BENEFITS

In the past three decades, IEDC has educated over 90.000 students in its diverse programs out of which over 1300 are MBA students. A common denominator for all of them is that they were all participating in programs that all have the issues of ethics CSR and sustainability entwined in their very fabric. It means that IEDC provides a sustainable and responsible education of the highest quality to the broader region. Through its work it connects and works with the business sector very closely, which means it is in constant contact with the sector needs, thus being better positioned to provide solutions for the issues that it is facing while also expanding opportunities for ever more integrated cooperation. A significant part is also cooperation with other important research and educational sectors. In the end, this creates a unique and diverse ecosystem connecting HEIs, businesses, NGOs, public institutions and decision makers which aimed and better equipped to support positive change for the broader society.

