



Advancing the B Movement:

A Review of Different Models of Engagement Between Academics and B Lab Offices

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(B)Academics

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1. Introduction

This document presents the emergent experiences of local engagement between academics and B Lab Offices i.e. local initiatives involving academia aimed at accelerating the transition to a new economy, specifically through promoting teaching and research on B Corporations. The aim of this document is to share how these efforts have emerged and evolved, their different models, challenges and learning process, becoming a guide to assist academics and B Lab Offices from other countries to articulate and navigate the relationship between them.

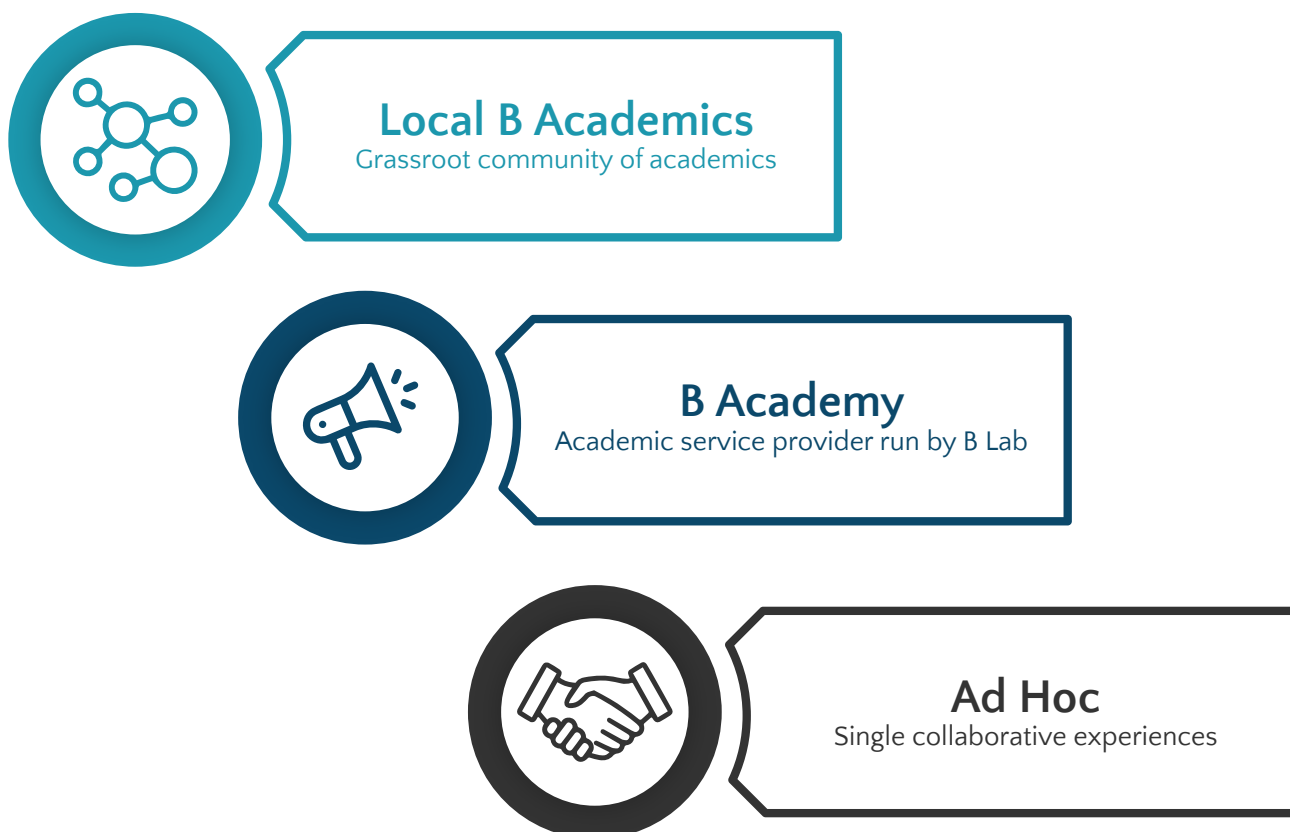
The document has been developed by the B Academics' Global Engagement Committee. B Academics is a network of educators and researchers from around the world who are committed to accelerating the sustainable business movement by studying the global movement of B Corporation certification and benefit corporations. B Academics work with each other, the global B Lab network, and the B Corp community to share best practices and identify opportunities for collaboration with regard to research, teaching, and experiential learning.

The Global Engagement Committee's goal is to expand the network of B Academics around the world, facilitating the creation of local B Academics, and alliances with existing academic networks and other organizations that are supportive of entrepreneurs, students, faculty, and others involved in sustainability and social responsibility. The members of this Committee are: Min Ko, Co-founder of B Corps China and Member of B Lab Global; Mumbi Wachira, Lecturer at Strathmore University Business School (Kenya); Alice Klettner, Senior Lecturer at the UTS Business School, University of Technology (Australia); Jonathan Normand, CEO B Lab Switzerland; Sébastien Chahidi, B Academy Programs Manager at B Lab Switzerland; Ramsés Gómez, Former Director of Academia B (Mexico) and current Head of Advocacy and Collaboration, Betterfly, and Verónica Devenin, Assistant Professor at EADA Business School (Spain) and Chair of this Committee.

The document is structured as follows: first, we summarize our findings regarding models of collaboration, based on the current local experiences. Then, we present the different cases of engagement between academics and B Lab Offices we have identified: B Academics and B Academy. These examples are based on the experiences of Spain, Switzerland, and Latin America. Additionally, we include diverse initiatives that are being held without having a more structured model or organization. These experiences are based on Asia, Africa and Oceania. Finally, we present some conclusions and further reflections.

2. Models of engagement between B Academics and B Local Offices

Based on the experiences of local efforts from Latin America, Spain, Switzerland, and others, we have identified three models for collaboration between academics and B Lab Offices as shown below.



The first model we term “Local B Academics”, comprising a local network of academic volunteers, in alliance with the local B Lab Office, and coordinated with B Academics Global. This model works as a local community of change, creating awareness, connecting academics, and creating academic products that answer local needs. The second one, called a “B Academy”, is created by a B Lab Office and offers academic services. We identified this model at a regional level (Academia B) and at a country level (Switzerland). Finally, the last approach is “ad hoc initiatives” between academics and B Lab offices, which may be considered as an early stage of engagement, although could be considered as a model itself. Next, we present case studies demonstrating these three models.

3. Case studies

a. Local B Academics as a grassroots community of academics

B Academics Spain

History

B Academics Spain emerged from two avenues. Firstly, B Lab Spain, founded in 2015, increasingly received requests from academics, both professors and students. The requests were primarily invitations to participate in courses in universities and business schools, and to facilitate access to B Corporations or B Corporation's data for research. By 2021, B Lab Spain had around 100 certified B Corps, and growing fast, and the number of interactions with academics was also increasing.

On the other hand, two members of the Board of B Academics Global were living in Spain, Belén Barroso, Chair of Communication, and Verónica Devenin, Chair of Global Engagement. One of the strategic goals of "Global Engagement" is to expand the network of B Academics around the world, facilitating the creation of local B Academics. According to this objective, these two academics launched the first pilot of a local B Academics, with the same global mission, but acting locally.

In 2021, B Academics Global promoted the first local pilot in coordination with B Lab Spain with the aim of contributing to the development and articulation of the local academic and professional community around the sustainable business movement. This network is committed to accelerating the study and teaching of B Corps and companies with a purpose in Spain.

Since then, they have achieved two B Academics Spain research workshops, promoting local research and networking, they have explored workshops between academics and practitioners, and they have started several collaborative projects to create pedagogical material and connect with practitioners and citizenship.

Main role and features

B Academics Spain works similar to a local community for change, or B Communities. It is a grass-root network of academics that voluntarily contribute to develop diverse initiatives that help local academics/ the academy to increase teaching and research about B Corporations, and therefore, contribute to the transition to a new economy.

What are B Communities?¹

“The B Communities are communities of change made up of people who, from the local level, use the strength of the companies to generate a positive impact. Led by motivated volunteers committed to the vision and values of the B Corp Movement, the B Communities exist to promote, at the local level, a fair and sustainable economy at a social, environmental and economic level. To achieve this, they strengthen the local ecosystem for the transition to an impact economy.

B Communities often derive local goals according to local needs, and carry them out by organizing and participating in local events, creating strategic alliances, and leading awareness and learning initiatives for businesses and individuals in their local territory.”

Local B Academics committed to work in an aligned manner with the local B Lab strategy. On the other hand, B Lab Spain has committed to support Local B Academics. Accordingly, B Lab Spain provides the following support:

- Attending meetings to discuss objectives, challenges, and supporting projects.
- Participating in B Academics Spain initiatives.
- Sharing opportunities and connections that are relevant to the development of Local B Academics.
- Creating a special chapter in B Lab Spain Website, as well as considering our initiatives in B Lab Spain newsletter and other communication channels.
- Providing a rubric of local B Academics activities.

B Academics Global, on the other hand, supports the local initiatives, and contributes through activating its network to contact speakers and give a global status to the initiative, as well as using its communications channels to share and promote local initiatives. The local B Academics has its own space in the partners' section of the B Academics website, and the events held locally are also uploaded in the global website, giving visibility to the local initiative. Additionally, the achievements of the local B Academics are highlighted in the [B Academics Impact Report](#). The local activities are shared with the Board Members of B Academics during the monthly Board Meetings.

Currently, B Academics, B Academics Spain and B Lab Spain are preparing a collaboration agreement to set how the local B Academic network works and collaborates with the B Lab local chapter.

Governance structure

Founder group

The founder group includes representatives from B Lab Spain and B Lab Europe, members of B Academics Global, as well as academics from diverse universities and business schools. The academics called to become a member of the founder group were defined by the Director of B Lab Spain, considering their previous engagement and active interaction with B Lab Spain. The membership is at an individual level, not institutional level, in the case of academics.

The members of the founder group are the following.

¹Based on the document: B Lab Spain (2021). *Guía de las comunidades B*. Recursos para los líderes de las Comunidades B de España. V.1. Inspirado en *B Local Community Handbook v3.0*

Pablo Sánchez (Director B Lab Spain); Daniel Truran (B Lab Europe); Verónica Devenin (B Academics Global and EADA Business School); Belén Barroso (B Academics Global and AlmaNatura); Nieves Segovia (Institución Educativa SEK); Federica Massa-Saluzzo (EADA Business School); Alfred Vernis (ESADE Business School); Concepción Galdón / Martina Pasquini (Instituto de Empresa); Ana Fernández Laviada (Centro Yunus Universidad de Cantabria); Marta Mas/ Nina Magomedova (Universidad Internacional de Cataluña).

The founder group is organized across four areas:

Topic	Leaders	Description	Current initiatives (2022)
Creating pedagogical materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Marta Mas · Nina Magomedova · Concepción Galdón · Ana Fernández 	Development of materials on B Corps Training for teachers in the B Corp Movement	Developing a open source book with 11 teaching cases on Spanish B Corporations
Synergies between businesses and academia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Federica Massa-Saluzzo · Daniel Trurán · Verónica Devenin 	Developing spaces or tools that create value both for academia and for companies seeking to have an impact	<p>As part of the Barcelona Can B initiative, we are conducting a series of workshops to identify how education can accelerate the transition to a new economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · How primary and secondary education help to promote responsible consumers · How undergraduate education help to develop changemakers · How executive education help to develop responsible leaders <p>Our aim is to publish a document with the main discussions and proposals to increase the impact of academia in a more sustainable future</p>
Student engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Alejandro Delso · David Martin 	Increasing the participation of students	Developing tools and strategies to involve students (degree or master's thesis, challenges)
Collaborative research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Belén Barroso · Alfred Vernis · Martina Pasquini 	Promote research on purpose driven companies / B Corps	Collaborative research on rural enterprises with social/ environmental impact

The network of academics beyond the founding group is growing slowly through different channels:

- B Lab Spain website: academics can fill a form to be connected with the network.

- The founder group identify and connects with academics that are engaged with teaching or research on B Corps.

In both cases, the founder group connects with group members every time there is an opportunity to participate according to their profile, for example to participate in the research workshop or participating in the teaching case book. They are also considering having general meetings with the whole network to share the updates and discuss relevant topics.

Resources

Currently B Academics Spain doesn't have financial resources. Each initiative is self-sustained. As an example:

- Research workshops: Academics engaged with B Academics Spain organize the research workshop as an activity based at their own university. Every year, the research workshop rotates, being organized by academics from different universities.



- Teaching cases book: academics from the founder group who had experience creating this type of publication took the lead to develop the book. As the aim of the book is to create open-access, Spanish language, pedagogical material “ready to use” for academics to increase teaching on this new kind of business, B Lab Spain is collaborating with funds to edit and publish the book online. Additional funding would help to translate the book to English.

Challenges

- Governance: Leadership rotation, institutionalization of the network, how to involve all academics subscribed in the network.
- Time: Usually, academics have overwhelming teaching and research workload. Identifying synergies and connecting with academics’ interests are promising ways to engage and support academic’s dedication to the network.

Alliances

- The main alliances are with B Lab Spain and B Academics Global
- The relationship with Universities or Business Schools is developed through academics

The experience of how to tackle identified local needs

The first year of local B Academics was a learning process that enabled to identify the main needs that academics and the academy in Spain have regarding the B Corp Movement. This was an iterative process, based on the founder group meetings.

One of the most relevant needs was pedagogical material, ready to use, in Spanish and open source, so any professor in any university or business can download this material easily.

Another relevant topic is training the trainers. This is an ongoing initiative which is still not clear on how to advance. Different methods have been explored, such as creating courses depending on B Lab Spain or to create them based on universities.

Stimulating research locally was another identified gap. The B Academics Spain research workshops answer that need. However, organizing this workshop every year is not necessarily the best. Apparently, every two years is a better timing, giving time to researchers to develop their work. An additional work stream is to promote collaborative research through proposing relevant themes at the national level, for instance, the challenge of rural depopulation. Research on rural enterprises with social impact is an initiative that is slowly developing to answer this need.

Other needs that were identified include the lack of connection between academia and practitioners, as well as the need to engage the next generation in this movement through academia. Based on this diagnosis, the previously mentioned working groups were established.

What to take into consideration (learning lessons)

This is a learning process, based on academics volunteering, therefore:

- The support of Local B Lab is crucial to connect and engage academics
- The support of B Academics Global is crucial to have global recognition and the global network support
- Institutionalization seems to be a good way to make the community sustainable
- Offering concrete results enables to consolidate the network (not becoming just another network)

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Website: www.bacademics.org/about/

b. Local B Academy as a B Lab office initiative

Academia B

History

Academia B is a global initiative of Sistema B International², based in Latin America, that invites academia to be an agent of change.

Thanks to the support of Canada's International Development Research Centre – IDRC and CAF – Development Bank of Latin America, in 2015, Sistema B created Academia B, a network of educators, students and researchers designed to accompany the knowledge and development of skills for a new economy.

In partnership with several universities, Academia B supports research, training and student, academics and entrepreneurs' networks, who want to reflect, study, communicate and develop concrete examples of companies and economic practices whose success measures the integral well-being and not only the profits of shareholders.

Teaching other ways of doing business and offering new hopes and ambitions is fundamental. As IDRC's Carolina Robino states:

"Today millions of people, particularly women and youth, are excluded from social and economic advances, and we are all witnessing the drastic consequences of a rapidly changing climate. An inclusive and sustainable economy requires the active engagement of companies. Many are already on that path. Purpose-driven companies are emerging players seeking to build a new economy that includes everyone. However, the impact they seek is systemic, and they cannot achieve their goal alone. This is the proposal of Sistema B. A collaborative invitation to generate a renewed ecosystem, where economic opportunity also means solving our problems of exclusion and inequality. Researchers, students, universities, and research centers are a key part of this ecosystem.

A new economy and new companies require a new generation of business leaders; they require rigorous evidence on the opportunities to connect social, environmental, and economic impact; they require sharing lessons and learnings about failures and accomplishments. And that is Academia B: an invitation for academia to work as an agent of change, as a key player in a renewed ecosystem for a more inclusive and sustainable economy."

² Sistema B is a non-profit organization that believes that governments, civil society organizations, social movements, citizens and businesses' social responsibility, all together, are not enough to solve our current social and environmental problems. It promotes B Corps and other economic actors in Latin America in order to build a new economy, in which success and financial benefits include social and environmental well-being. <https://www.sistemab.org/en/welcome/>

Academia B, under the coordination of an International Advisory Board, invites professors, researchers, and students to join this movement, get closer to B entrepreneurs, and supports the development of young researchers and applied and relevant scholarship on the new actors of the economy in Latin America.

Main role and features

Academia B is a strategic global initiative of Sistema B to accelerate the scale of the movement for a new economy, through:

- Development of pedagogical tools and training programs: Training tools and institutional support programs that enable B Corporations as a pedagogical tool in Higher Education.
- Research and generation of knowledge: New knowledge and evidence from B Corporations models and impacts, as well as from other innovations of the B movement.
- Create spaces of encounter and dialogue: Meeting for reflection and action from the academy to promote the structural conditions for the new economy.

Governance structure

Academia B, in its beginnings, formed an International Advisory Council that determines its priorities and topics of interest. Currently, the role of the Executive Director of Academia B is to promote:

Training activities:

- Identify innovative and attractive training tools and materials and promote alliances with other networks or academic institutions.
- Develop and disseminate innovative face-to-face and on-line training activities through the Academic Multipliers B program.
- Develop and disseminate tools and platforms for professors and the university community.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration between the B community and academia (internships, workshops, strategic programs, etc.).
- Support the organization of academic events in which Academia B is part of the organizing team.

Research Activities:

- Coordinate and monitor calls and research advances promoted by Academia B, considering the validation of experts and the correct compensation associated with the winning proposals.
- Facilitate the relationship of researchers with Sistema B and with the community of Empresas B, accompanying them in the process.
- Identify research opportunities, generating the necessary liaisons for them to be carried out.
- Promote and develop workshops for discussion and dissemination of research and its results to provide practical tools for B Enterprises and suggestions for public policy.
- Make technical progress reports to funders.

Sustainability is given by a combination of grants and monetizable projects. Some recent concrete examples that provide financial sustainability to Academia B and allow it to contribute to systemic change towards a New Economy include:

Teacher Training and Teaching Update Courses in Education for the New Economy.

Main objectives of the course

- Accelerate the role of academia in building an economic system that cares for people and the planet.
- Strengthen teachers in their ability to contribute to the delivery of a new type of knowledge and tools around purposeful business.
- Introduce B Corporations as a pedagogical tool in higher education.
- Spark a conversation about the core competencies to equip a new generation of new economy professionals.
- Enable a community of educators that encourages the future generation of social entrepreneurs, agents of change and professionals that drive market solutions to socio-environmental challenges.
- See detailed program [HERE](#)
 - Paid program. Training for a group of 25 professors. Includes a fee for the Local
 - Sistema B that enables the training in your territory.

Redesign of the Syllabus of business courses and production of Business Cases of B Corporations to be used as pedagogical tools for Higher Education.

- For example a case on PACARI, a family-owned, organic chocolate business in Ecuador and a case on BUNA, a coffee company in Mexico.
- Paid program.

Research funded by International Cooperation.

- For example studies funded by the International Development Research Centre of Canada
- Most recent study: "[The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Latin America for Business and Impact Investment Training and Education.](#)"
- See study [HERE](#)

Training programs that strengthen the value offer for LATAM B Corporations.

- Most recent program "From Linear to Circular - Latin America." A collaboration between the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Sistema B International, through Academia B.
- See program [HERE](#)

A new way of teaching

Academia B offers innovative training and support tools for student and teacher networks. Example: Thanks to the support of CAF and in alliance with the SEKN network and the Latin American Council of Management Schools-CLADEA, an open call was made for the development of case studies on Latin American B Corporations, to be distributed globally through Harvard Business Schools and Ivey SB, Canada.

The B Academic Multipliers program allows teachers to be updated on these new topics and have access to case studies and experiential training tools, such as the aim2flourish network. The face-to-face course has been offered to more than 1,500 academics in universities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

The online library is a widely used resource. It offers case studies, course syllabi for business and law schools, student theses and research advances available in Spanish, English and Portuguese. [LINK](#)

Applied and Relevant Research

Academia B has conducted 11 calls for research on "Climate Change Risks and Opportunities for B Corporations in Latin America," "Understanding the Systemic Impacts of B Corporations on Social and Economic Opportunities for Women and Youth in Latin America," and on the learnings from the Rio+B case.

Early research results are very promising. For example, the in-depth study on Latin American life-enhancing enterprises has promoted new research on innovative business models to address climate change. These companies include the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and, above all, the building of community and ecosystem resilience, as an integral part of their business, not as a benefit or externality. This research has led to the creation of two university courses, numerous workshops, a community of twenty young researchers, academic publications in recognized journals (including a special issue of the Journal Organization and Environment, under the call for papers Regenerative Organizations: Business and Climate Action Beyond Mitigation and Adaptation).

The experience of how to tackle the identified local needs, step by step

Sistema B at National level' teams (SBN) are mostly small and often with a high diversity and heterogeneity of activities. Therefore, enabling linkages with academia without a clear strategy can quickly become a distraction. On the contrary, properly articulated, Academy B has the capacity to accelerate systemic changes towards the New Economy and enhance the financial sustainability of the offices.

In all cases, the link with the Academy should be based on the answer to the question: *How does Academia B contribute to the fulfillment of the local office's goals?*

Some answers to the question: How does Academia B contribute to the fulfillment of the local office's goals?

Example 1:

If an SBN is looking to enable the sale of Caminos+B, Academy B is a natural bridge to get in touch with high profile business leaders by inserting a "System B and B Impact Assessment" module within an existing Executive Education offering at an educational institution.

Note: The profile in this case is not undergraduate but graduate students, most of whom, according to the institution's profile, are decision makers.

System B can then i) issue fees for the delivery of the module, ii) monetize its convening capacity by establishing a shared fee model for the number of Executive Education Diploma registrants, and iii) above all, present its programmatic offer (e.g., Path B, Measure What Matters, etc.) to a diverse group of decision-makers.

Example 2:

If an SBN is currently driving efforts to enable the BIC Companies Act, having the collaboration of a university and in particular a high-profile Dean or Executive from the Business School and/or Law School enables a strategic liaison to accelerate the conditions for ecosystemic transformation towards new economies.

What to take into consideration (learning lessons)

One of the primary objectives of Academia B is to create installed capacity in higher education institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean, and therefore the target audience is professors and researchers, not students.

Academia B is not an initiative that aims to provide lectures to university students. This is highly time-consuming and, in its experience, financially unsustainable.

Instead, accompanying the transformation of curricula at the institutional level impacts a larger number of students, enables sustained impacts over time, and generates a profound cultural change.

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B Academy Switzerland

History

Since 2014, B Lab Switzerland has been building the B Academy network of educators, researchers, students and practitioners.

- 2014 : Launch of the B Academy Program, Jonathan Normand representing B Lab Europe for Switzerland
- 2015 : First partnerships with University of Geneva (UNIGE)
- 2018 : Partnerships with Geneva School of Business Administration (HEG-GE) and UNIGE
- 2019 : New collaborations with Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL), extension of partnerships with UNIGE and HEG-GE
- 2020 : New collaborations with University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland (HES-SO), University of St Gallen (IWÖ-HSG), Faculty of Business and Economics, EDHEC Business School, University of Lausanne (HEC-UNIL), School of Engineering and Management Vaud (HEIG-VD), UNIGE and EPFL
- 2021 Renewed partnerships and collaborations with UNIGE, HEC-UNIL, IWÖ-HSG, School of Management Fribourg (HEG-FR) and HEG-GE

Main role and features

Academic institutions play a crucial role in shaping the leaders of tomorrow and preparing students for the realities they will face once they graduate and enter the professional world. That is why, with B Academy, B Lab Switzerland has developed a series of programs that aim to broaden students' knowledge on sustainability issues, provide tools and case studies to solve business challenges and expand their professional behavior and skills. B Academy Switzerland has several programs to educate future change-makers on the 21st century's Grand Sustainability Challenges:

1. Class Intervention

- a. For whom? Bachelor, Master, MBA, Continuing Education
- b. Duration : 1h00 - 1h30
- c. Compensation: Free
- d. Goal : to give students a global vision of sustainable development challenges in the private sector. It provides an introduction to the key concepts of sustainability. These are the company's social and environmental impact and good governance practices. The tools to measure and manage a company's extra-financial impacts are also addressed. Interaction with the audience is placed at the center of the intervention to stimulate critical thinking and trigger interest in the topic.

2. Mock-Consulting

- a. For whom? Bachelor students
- b. Duration : 3-6 weeks (course module)
- c. Compensation: Paid

d. Goal: the Mock-Consulting program introduces business students to the strategic management of sustainability challenges with a hands-on approach. Students are made to work in groups on a mock company with the objectives first of identifying social, environmental, or governance impact improvements and then building a case for their implementation. Students take this opportunity to deepen their understanding of the innate complexity of balancing purpose and profit, and to think innovatively on solutions to tackle implementation barriers they identified. The B Impact Assessment (BIA) serves as a reference framework for impact management.

3. Full-Fledged Business Consulting (B Impact Assessment)

- a. For whom? Master and MBA students
- b. Duration : 3-12 weeks (semester)
- c. Compensation: Paid
- d. Goal: The Business Consulting (BIA) program is an enhanced version of the Mock-Consulting teaching. It offers a deeper dive into the strategic management of key sustainability challenges of private companies. Students then have the opportunity to apply their learnings by working with real companies to address these challenges. B Lab Switzerland activates its ecosystem of private enterprises willing to share their extra-financial performances, BIA score and advancements in sustainability to offer students concrete case studies. Taking into account the companies' specificities, each group produces an Impact Improvement Report, which presents a set of recommendations to either address impact gaps, or improve existing operational and business model impacts. This provides a hands-on experience for students to understand how to build recommendations, and the challenges of the path from ideation to concretization.

4. Full-Fledged Business Consulting (SDG Action Manager Tool)

- a. For whom? Master and MBA students
- b. Duration : 3-12 weeks (semester)
- c. Compensation: Paid
- d. Goal: The Business Consulting (SDG) program is an iteration of the Business Consulting (BIA) course. It provides students with critical insights on the structuring benefits of the Sustainable Development Goals for the private sector, the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, and the use of the SDG Action Manager tool. Students are connected with actual companies to map out their contributions to the SDGs and develop recommendations to further these contributions. Students present their findings during a final oral presentation at the end of the class and submit the report to the company.

5. Academic workshops

- a. For whom? With students' associations
- b. Duration : 1-4 hours
- c. Type : B Academy Switzerland has collaborated with the students associations like OIKOS and others on many occasions. OIKOS is the leading university students' association in the fields of economics and management, present in numerous Swiss universities. A partnership consisted in co-hosting a Sustainability Workshop at the

University St. Gallen, together with other associations like START, Student Impact, and the Social Business Club. Another collaboration took place in the framework of the OIKOS & START - an entrepreneurship students' association - Start-Ups Challenge. It provided students with foundational knowledge in how to embed sustainability within the business model of their start-up from inception. It also allowed for a deep immersion in impact management through tools like B Lab Switzerland's impact analysis matrix (Impact Business Model Spectrum Chart) and the B Impact Assessment.

Then, the program offers Sustainability Introduction Workshops for numerous start-up contests, such as the Prix Strategis 2021 of HEC Espace Entreprise, for which Jonathan Normand is a member of the judging panel.

Governance structure

B Academy programs are managed at B Lab Switzerland level, alongside B Lab's other engagements and educational programs such as Swiss Boards for Agenda 2030 or the Swiss Triple Impact initiative. This management is done at the Senior Leadership Team level.

Resources of B Academy

- Teaching hours:
 - Classes range from 1h intervention to 12-week classes and are taught by B Lab employees, specifically trained for this purpose, and with expertise on the sustainability fields taught about.
- Content preparation time :
 - Dozens of hours to prepare the class for the first time.
 - Multiple hours to refresh the previous year's content.
- Administrative time :
 - A dozen hours each year: group students, contact and find participating companies if applicable or potential external interventions, and organization with the university.
- Financing :
 - Short interventions are free.
 - Longer interventions are paid through direct financing from universities and partners.

Alliances

- Partners universities: B Academy Switzerland have had programs with seven Swiss universities UNIGE, HEG-GE, EPFL, UNIL (HEC), HSG (IWÖ-HSG), HEG-FR, HES-SO.
- Other collaborations: Students associations like OIKOS, START, Student Impact, and the Social Business Club.

The experience of how to tackle the identified local needs

The main local need identified is related to the lack of links made between Educational programs in Switzerland (of any type) and Sustainability issues. As of 2021-22, most degrees do not include classes related to sustainability.

Challenges & What to take into consideration (lessons learnt)

- Time: on top of the workload related to preparing the class content (which may need slight refreshment each time), there is quite some administrative work to do in terms of scheduling, contacting participating companies, giving information to students, being in contact with the university.
- Adaptation:
 - To the students' level (bachelor's, master's, MBA...): It is key to adapt the course content to the academic level of the students, the way the grading is done, the extent of the support provided to the students, and well as their maturity on sustainability thematics.
 - To the students' field of studies: For instance, students with management, entrepreneurship, or sustainability majors will all have different approaches to problem-solving, with their own strengths and weaknesses. Class content and design shall account for these specificities, in order to offer the best learning experience and outcomes. Those differences are to be considered when creating or giving a class.

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c. Adhoc collaborative experiences between academics and B Lab offices

Example in Africa

B Lab Africa

Background

B lab Africa is the regional hub for B Corps across Africa. The community includes over 50 B Corps across the continent. In addition, due to B Lab advocacy, over 2000 businesses in Africa measure and manage their impact using the B Impact Assessment and the SDG Action Manager. B Lab's work with regional universities is still at a nascent stage, however, they have an ongoing partnership with Strathmore University (also based in Nairobi) to collaborate on the following key areas:

- Delivery of joint capacity building programs, research and projects that focus on responsible business practices.
- Implementation of sustainability executive programs . B lab Africa would focus specifically on the application of the SDG Action Manager, B Impact Assessment and B Analytics.
- Joint events such as public lectures, breakfasts and webinars that raise awareness on business sustainability topics.

Currently, B Lab Africa is a training partner in facilitating a sustainability course with Strathmore University Business School (SBS) for Absa Bank Kenya's network of suppliers.

Website: www.b-labafrika.net

Examples in Asia

B Corps China

Background

Since 2016, Leping Foundation (official country partner of B Lab to be in charge of B Corp movement in Mainland China) has been building the network of educators, researchers and practitioners around various fields of social innovation and stakeholder economy. B Corps China, a special team under the Leping Foundation, has been catalyzing the discussion on the stakeholder-driven economy in the local market since 2017 and also developing a growing community of B Corps promoting business as a force for good. In the past 5 years, B Corps China has also been building up a network of researchers and practitioners focusing on the case studies of B Corps, BIA localizations, and stakeholder-economy course development in China.

Main Objective: Facilitate cross-sector, stakeholder-driven innovation and practice in China by constructing eco-systems for knowledge generation based on local conditions that aim to expand the impact of the stakeholder economy across industries.

Challenges

Still early stage and developing ways to operate and grow.
B Corps China would like to connect more with the global initiatives on exchanging and sharing resources and knowledge.

Alliances/Partners

B Corps China has alliances with Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business (CKGSB), Tsinghua University, Citylinx and Nanjing University.

Website: www.bcorpasia.org/china

B Lab Taiwan

Background

Since 2017, B Lab Taiwan has been building a B Academy network with local universities to enable professors and students (undergraduates, postgraduates, EMBA) to learn the system change of the 21st capitalism.

Main Objective: Promote the B Lab “Impact Business Model” on campus through connecting with professors and students.

Resources

We work with universities in the form of course collaboration. The resources include teachers’ and B Lab Taiwan’ team members’ time.

Challenges and opportunities

Currently, teachers seem to “outsource” courses to us. We’re going to train them to conduct the courses independently.

There are more schools requesting B Corp courses but B Lab Taiwan does not have enough capacity to meet their needs. Thus, they are thinking of creating an on-line training program for teachers’ self study.

There’s potential for leveraging B Academy initiatives to create more impact. Creating more shared resources, e.g. an on-line BIA training program for external use, would assist.

Website: www.blab.tw

B Lab Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand

Background

B Lab Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (B Lab AANZ) was launched in 2013 by a small group of Australian B Corps, to build regional momentum for the B Corp movement. There are now over 400 B Corps in the region. B Lab AANZ has grown rapidly over recent years to cope with certification demand and in 2021 altered its governance model to formalize the voices of B Corps in the direction-setting of B Lab AANZ. In addition to its board of directors, B Lab AANZ now has a B Council (forum for B Corps) and Horizon Council (forum for broader perspectives).

Collaboration and partnerships

Collaboration between B Lab AANZ and academia has been ad hoc, for example:

- B Lab AANZ has partnered with Torrens University (a B Corp itself) to produce educational materials on B Corp certification.
- B Lab AANZ occasionally puts out a call (on its website) for interested research partners to collaborate on exploring specific topics, for example, how to implement stakeholder governance or to measure the value of alternative business models.
- B Lab AANZ has engaged with Universities in thought leadership around 'grand challenges' that align with the B Corp model, such as climate change mitigation.

Challenges and opportunities

As B Corp certification has become more popular, B Lab AANZ has faced challenges associated with fast organizational growth and limited resources. Where possible they collaborate in relation to activities that help to build advocacy for 'business for good' and/or provide theoretical validation of B Corp business models. B Lab AANZ is conscious of not asking too much of B Corp executives in terms of participation in research. They provide publicly available data on the B Corp cohort which academics may use.

Website: www.bcorporation.com.au

3. Conclusions and reflections

Academia is a critical actor for the transition to a new economy. Teaching to new generations and current business leaders new ways to do business, driven by purpose and creating positive impact, can have an amplified effect. Introducing these notions, and using the B Corp movement and B Corporations as a successful example is like planting seeds to create new understanding on the role of business in society and how to use the force of business for good. Research is critical as well, to understand how this kind of business actually performs, their challenges and lessons learnt.

Many academics are dissatisfied with teaching and researching business as usual. Many have started to research and teach about sustainable businesses, and some of them are getting more and more engaged with B Corporations and the B Corp Movement as leading examples of sustainable businesses. As academics, we want to have an impact and contribute to the purpose ecosystem. However, usually these efforts are individual efforts. These emergent engagement models enable those academics to connect with the B Corp Movement, to collaborate with local B Lab Offices, to collaborate with other academics with similar interests, and to contribute to advance this movement both locally and globally.

This document is, therefore, a guide, a set of examples that can help local B Lab offices and academics from around the world to create this kind of network to enhance collaboration and impact from academia. We expect this document to be a living document, which will be updated as current experiences evolve and new experiences emerge.