Live Sustainability as You Learn It

Zina Kyriakou - Madouna Ghanem and Soula Kyriakou

Sustainable development does not simply require a will to change one's behavior or become aware of the environment around us. It is above all a matter of culture, knowing that our relationship with nature is not the same in all societies. In some cultures, nature is expected to serve mankind. In others, it is nature that should be served. If we want to change behavior, we have to do it through a cultural evolution that requires a different approach than that of today. Indeed, we have to practice what we preach if we want the current and future generations to change their conduct. As humans, we have rights and we have responsibilities toward our environment, society, and communities.

How can we highlight individual social responsibility?

In the corporate environment, when individuals join a new company, they go through an induction period so as to get exposed to the company's culture through which they understand and apply the company's philosophy. This induction period helps the new recruit to act and deal with the new environment and be aware of his responsibilities and rights, so the induction provides a code of conduct.

At the International Executive School (IES), we educate people by preparing them to tackle present and future challenges. We consider sustainability one of the world's main current and future challenges that need to be tackled in three different ways. Sustainability requires a shift in our cultural beliefs and our individual and group behaviors. To succeed, states have to enforce laws and create platforms to support the shift. Corporations also have to make their activities sustainable. As citizens, consumers, and activists, we need to be aware of our responsibilities and embrace change.

Based on that, IES students go through an induction period focusing on the importance of sustainability and how to achieve it through their experience at IES in different areas. The induction period helps them develop student social responsibility, which provides the grass roots for individual social responsibility. It lasts three days, during which students are exposed to the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals and their importance with respect to the world's current environmental, social, and economic challenges. The IES educational team partners with different actors - such as non-government organizations, state representatives, community representatives, influencers, and activists - in order to challenge the students to consider different sustainable development goals. In a very pragmatic approach, based on today's challenges, our students develop solutions to different issues linked to the sustainable development goals that they identify by themselves in their environment.

As the IES educational team is supported by experts from different backgrounds, our role is to challenge these solutions and our student's analysis and critical thinking in order to develop their problem-solving skills so that they can tackle the
complex issue of sustainability. Our students have diverse backgrounds and cultures. We believe that they are capable of causing change, challenging the status quo, and tackling difficult issues. Our role is to provide them with a platform of knowledge, motivation, and trust, so as to encourage them to demonstrate their skills and competencies, and enhance their capacities.

Our educational approaches highlight sustainability and do not stop at the induction level. We have a special Bachelor degree in Spa and Wellness based on sustainability. IES is the only school to launch a Spa and Wellness Bachelor’s program in business management. The students gain the needed expertise and skills to manage spa and wellness centers in the growing spa ecosystem and market.

It was essential to develop a module on the micro and macro constraints that will directly impact sustainable development goals which are essential in every workplace. The module is called Sustainable Workplace Wellness. It combines wellness concepts and the sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

We need to define operations and activities. Operations are carried out by staff and management. Activities are carried out by outside stakeholders, such as clients and suppliers. The 17 sustainable development goals set by UNESCO can directly impact the wellness of all our stakeholders in this module in both activities. Second, we need to define the wellness concept. It is the concept of living in a balanced way that can impact the longevity and quality of life reflected in eight dimensions. In this module, we discuss five of them: emotional, social, environmental, mental and physical. The five wellness dimensions relate to sustainable development goal number three: good health and well-being. This sustainable development goal faces micro and macro constraints in the spa ecosystem. The module shows that both activities are closely connected and related to the responsibilities and duties of stakeholders. They are necessary for the achievement of sustainable development goal number three. At IES, we teach our students the methods, strategies and techniques to control, adapt, and manage constraints in order to promote wellness in every workplace. This should lead to a balanced work place and life balance for all stakeholders involved in any organization.

This module is taught in our diploma of spa and wellness management program because we believe that sustainability in wellness in every workplace can be the first milestone toward community and country wellness and having a good and balanced life. This is the right of every human. The module generated a lot of interest and has the potential to be taught at different universities and colleges due to the importance and the uniqueness of the topic. It is in high demand nowadays because of the growing importance of wellness and the rising demand for spa and wellness centers.
SWW Module
Sustainable Workplace Wellness

Operation level
(The workplace involving management & staff)

Activities level
(Involving, influencing and affecting clients)

Good Health and well being

Environmental

Physical

Emotional

Social

3

Constraints

MACRO
1. Failing health system.
2. Urbanization and middle class growth.
3. Lifestyle and environmental disease.
4. Agriculture and food.
5. Pollution.
6. Technology and connectivity.
8. Wellness real estate.
9. Wellness tourism.
10. Workplace wellness.

MICRO
1. Spa Economy.
2. Spa consulting.
3. Spa capital investments.
4. Spa education.
5. Spa media associations and events.
6. SDG-4 Quality Education.

1-No poverty.
2-Zero Hunger.
8-Decent work and Economic growth.
10-Reduced inequality.
11-Sustainable cities and communities.
13-Climate Action.
16-Peace and Justice Strong Institutions.

Industry Innovation and Infrastructure

Gender Equality

Responsible consumption and production

Clean water and sanitation

Partnership to achieve the goal

Educates people by preparing them to tackle present and future challenges.