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Headline: Seven Business School Partnerships Tackling Climate Change

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Tackling climate change is a key issue for business schools, and by collaborating they can have a ... [+] GETTY IMAGES

Climate change is a global issue that the UN describes as the defining issue of our time. And as with every global issue, the most effective approach to tackling such a challenges through collaboration – whether that be between countries, companies or activists.

If any sector has expertise in cross-country collaboration, it is business education. A truly international field, where faculty, researchers and students work day in day out with people from different continents, countries and cultures. And tackling climate change is a key issue for business schools too – they must train the future leaders of tomorrow to be ethically conscious and environmentally friendly. By cross-collaborating, business schools can have a greater impact.

These 8 Inspiring Founders Ensure That Earth Day Is Everyday

As part of Earth Month here are seven different collaborative partnerships between business schools from across the world, all of which all aim to address sustainability and climate change, and to help provide solutions to provide us with a brighter future.

Business Schools for Climate Leadership “BS4CL” Partnership

Eight of Europe’s top business schools - INSEAD, Oxford Saïd Business School, HEC Paris, Cambridge Judge Business School, IE Business School, IESE Business School, IMD and London Business School - have collaborated in order to take action and use their thought leadership expertise to protect humanity. They aim to help present and future leaders to combat the climate crisis.

When asked why it is important for business schools to collaborate for programmes like these, Can Aydođan, Project Coordinator for the Business Schools for Climate Leadership initiative at INSEAD explains, “It is essential for business schools to collaborate to tackle environmental issues because the challenges are complex and multidisciplinary.

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Collaboration allows for the pooling of resources, expertise and knowledge. This enables us to generate more impactful research and provide stronger education.”

BS4CL has put together a digital toolkit drawing on the expertise of each business school to help business leaders pose key questions and assess their readiness to act effectively to tackle this planetary emergency.

The first four chapters take an ‘outside in’ perspective, asking where a climate constrained world is heading and what it means for business. The final four chapters take an ‘inside out’ perspective and ask whether companies’ business strategy and capabilities can be leveraged or need to be altered to meet the challenges of climate action.

INNOVA Europe

A partnership aiming to tackle societal, economic, and environmental challenges has been launched by three major European academic institutions - Italy’s POLIMI Graduate School of Management, France’s EDHEC Business School and Germany’s ESMT Berlin and supported by Microsoft Italia.

“Technology and innovation are the key forces behind tangible environmental and social action, and this challenge was launched as a priority to provide the practical skills and mentorship for early-stage pioneers aiming to build concrete solutions to tackle climate change and shape a better future for all” says Tommaso Agasisti, Associate Dean for International Relations & Quality at POLIMI GSoM.

This INNOVA Europe challenge consists of teams of up to five students who compete to create organisations that tackle societal, economic and environmental challenges based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s). The students’ proposals are evaluated by the three schools, and each pick a finalist. They then receive help in developing their idea further over several months to present in June 2023 at Microsoft’s headquarters in Milan . The winning team will win €5,000 and a chance to spend a year at their chosen business school’s incubator.

Professor Tommaso Agasisti, the Associate Dean for Internalization and Quality at POLIMI says “The magnitude of these issues is too great for one institution alone to solve. Together, we are stronger, and we can create greater momentum towards change.”

Singapore Green Finance Centre (SGFC)

This partnership draws on the strengths of Imperial College Business School and Singapore Management University in climate finance and risk, sustainable investing and more. It is made up of academic scholars, government policy makers and finance industry experts who are determined to develop green capital markets. The centre aims to equip institutions and professionals with the information and skills necessary to develop activities in green finance in the ASEAN region.

The Singapore Green Finance Centre will also develop a strong pipeline of experts in green finance, helping to enable the transition of capital markets in Asia towards a lower carbon future.

Dalia Daou, the Centre Director at the centre for Climate Finance and Investment at Imperial College Business School explains that the partnership was inspired to drive innovation and change in the finance industry. When asked about the benefits of partnerships, she added that “collaboration between business schools like ours is important. Partnerships can draw

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on each schools' respective strengths, resources and expertise in order to address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate and sustainability issues.”

Network for Business Sustainability (NBS).

The NBS facilitates a community of 170+ sustainability research centres in business schools around the world, with a main office at Canada's Ivey Business School, Western University, and a francophone office at L'Université du Québec à Montréal.

The Network for Business Sustainability aims to connect academics and researchers to advance sustainable business practices. They are non-profit, and hope to advance sustainable development in order to develop a fairer and more “environmentally sound future”. They want to improve business practice by facilitating a platform for experts to share knowledge across an international community of scholars, business leaders, policy makers and students.

Along with their members and stakeholders, they co-create high quality content that enables practical action. Their content is based on the following six themes: climate change, circular economy, sustainable finance, sustainable innovation, social justice and sustainable business education.

These themes help them to address the relevant issues and actions that should be taken, and provide an excellent opportunity for members to collaborate and help to educate others.

CY Initiative of Excellence (INEX)

As part of an academic consortium, ESSEC Business School and Cergy Paris Université in France have joined forces with other leading institutions to provide solutions to climate change and sustainability issues. The CY Initiative supports three funding programmes - Talent, Emergence and Horizon.

“Our aim is to develop and accelerate solutions for sustainable innovation,” explains Vincenzo Vinzi, Dean of ESSEC Business School, “through actions in research, training and entrepreneurship in order to meet the societal challenges.”

Their advanced study initiative supports research through organising international scientific events and its visiting researcher's programme. The CY AS, as it is known, promotes innovative and transdisciplinary projects. In order to facilitate this, they collaborate with different research centres and laboratories worldwide.

ESSEC and CY Cergy Paris University have also launched a "StartUp Studio" dedicated to sustainable innovation. By bringing together cutting-edge innovation developed by researchers and the entrepreneurial talents of the ESSEC ecosystem, the StartUp Studio enables the development of large-scale business projects that meet today's environmental challenges.

Alliance for Research on Corporate Sustainability (ARCS).

Another global partnership, providing members with data and networking opportunities in order to facilitate and advance rigorous research on corporate sustainability issues.

Alliance for Research on Corporate Sustainability was launched in 2009 by multiple institutions: Dartmouth College, Duke University, Harvard University, University of Michigan, University of Virginia and University of Western Ontario. The alliance has grown considerably since then, to include members such as INSEAD, Columbia Business School,

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Berkeley Haas, Rotterdam School of Management, MIT Sloan, NTU Singapore and many, many others.

Every year at the ARCS Annual Conference, a variety of awards are presented to celebrate the work of corporate sustainability scholars. These awards include the Emerging Sustainability Scholar Award, as well as awards specific to scholarly papers.

The aim is to create sustainable businesses through rigorous academic research. They hope that by doing this, they will develop a greater understanding of the opportunities and limits of policies that need to be addressed.

Net Impact

A global grassroots movement consisting of students and emerging impact leaders who want to use their skills to benefit the planet. The mission is to “inspire and equip emerging leaders to build a more just and sustainable world.”

Net Impact is a global body, with student and professional chapters for people to join. They are highly prevalent among leading US schools such as Berkeley Haas, UCLA Anderson, Chicago Booth, Georgetown McDonough and many leading European business schools including emlyon business school, ESMT Berlin, RSM and ESADE Business School. This gives students the opportunity to join and learn about the benefits of taking action against climate change, and networking with likeminded individuals all around the world.

Over 130,000 strong, the Net Impact community takes on social challenges, protects the environment, invents new products and orients business toward the greater good. In short, they help members turn their passions into a lifetime of world-changing action. They regularly host networking events on topics such as corporate social responsibility, non-profit management and environmental sustainability.