

# Sharing information on progress 2025

PRME report



## List of abbreviations

CE: Circular Economy

CSR Corporate Social Responsibility

ERS: Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability

ESD Education for Sustainable Development

IBSM: International Business School Maastricht

IB: International Business

IBE-ReGloMi: Innovating Business Education for Responsible Global Minds

ILO: Individual Learning Outcome

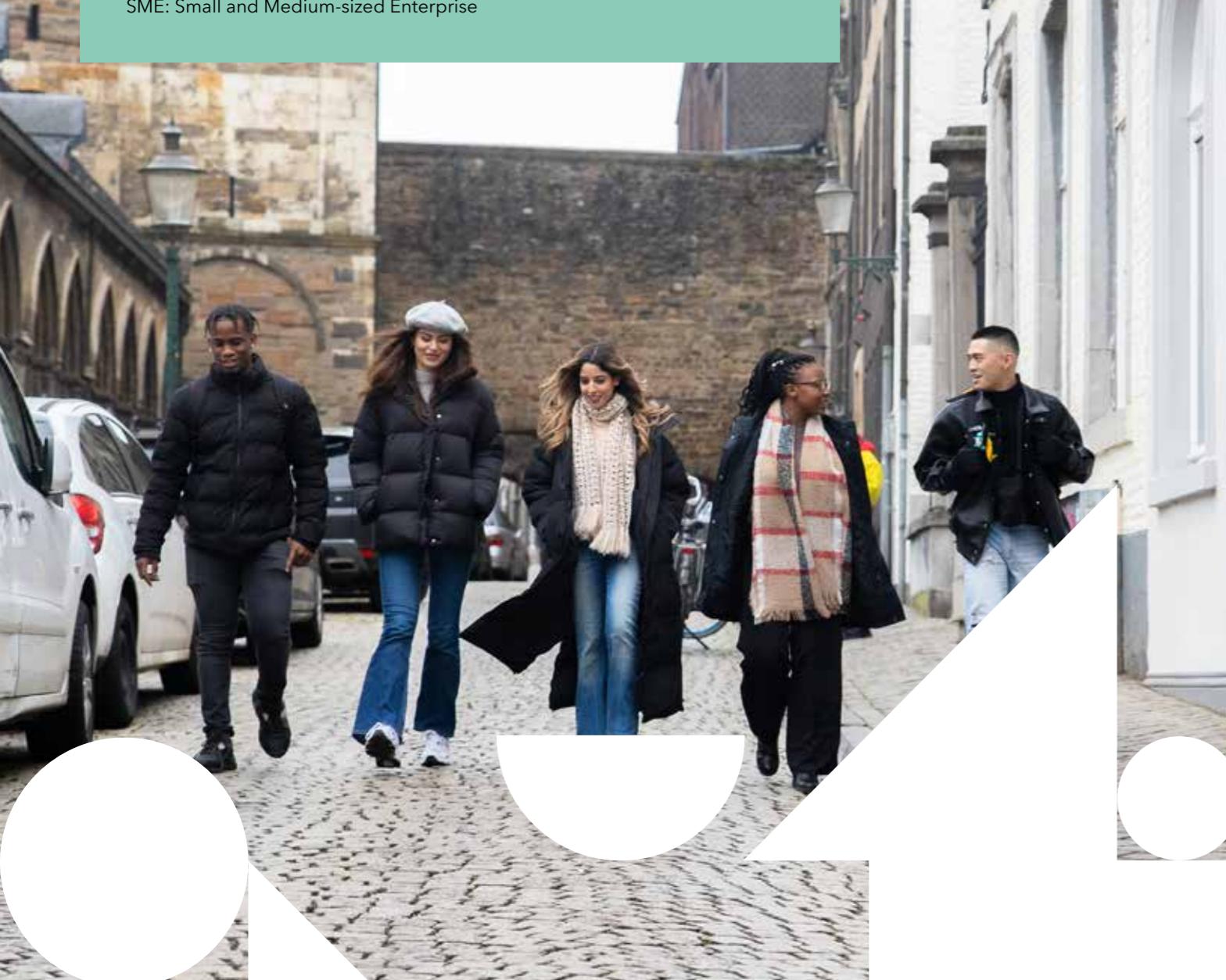
IDGs: Inner Development Goals

SIB: Sustainable International Business

PLO: Program Learning Outcome

SiTL: Student in the Lead

SME: Small and Medium-sized Enterprise



## Our commitment to PRME

Dear reader,

It is with great pleasure that we, at International Business School Maastricht (hereafter referred to as IBSM) of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences (hereafter referred to as Zuyd), present our third PRME update report. Key trends in higher education over the past two years include the increasing prevalence of online and hybrid learning, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) to personalize learning and support faculty, a growing focus on mental health awareness, shifts in student demographics, the rise of specialized programs (e.g., dual enrollment), and renewed efforts to address affordability. During the last two academic years (2023-2025), we have faced the challenge of building up and adapting to a new "reality" driven by these key trends. Our teaching, research, and support staff have worked diligently to help our International Business (hereafter referred to as IB) students adapt to this new "reality," trends, and challenges in higher education and business.

These trends and challenges clearly demonstrate the increasing importance of PRME. Educating and guiding our future IB professionals to become responsible managers in the IB field is vital for the sustainability of our world's people, environment, and businesses. We firmly believe that we have a responsibility to contribute to a sustainable future. In 2018, we at IBSM committed to PRME, and we are proud to say that we have made further progress in the right direction. At the same time, we understand that focusing on education for sustainable development (hereafter referred to as ESD) that incorporates technological advances is an ongoing process. In 2021, we compiled our first bi-annual PRME report, and in 2023, our second. We have been dedicated to evolving from an IB program to a Sustainable International Business (SIB) program. We hope you enjoy reading this third update report.

With kind regards,

Yvette Froeling, Nikos Kalogeras, Manon Niesten and Eefje Willems

The International Business Management Team

Maastricht, 30th of September 2025.

## About the International Business School Maastricht

The International Business School Maastricht (IBSM) offers full-time three-year and four-year Bachelor's degree study programs in International Business, which are entirely taught in English. IBSM hosts about 710 students and 40 staff members, including faculty and support staff. In addition, IBSM includes the research centre for Sustainable International Business (SIB). The mission and vision of the IB program is: "In this fast-changing world, we, at International Business School Maastricht, guide our young professionals to become resilient business leaders with a global mind."

**We believe that:**

- everybody is intrinsically motivated and fuelled with passion and curiosity to learn and develop themselves,
- everybody learns and develops in their own unique way and is there to take the lead in their own development process, and
- everybody deserves personal attention and guidance to develop themselves fully. And therefore,
- we offer our junior IB professionals' context and, above all freedom and responsibility to grow and to explore this fast-changing international business environment,
- by working in an internationally diverse community, we create an environment in which young professionals can challenge and learn from each other. Students learn by doing and gain experience in the international business context with the help of our IB team and expert business professionals. This makes that our IB graduates have acquired a sustainable and intercultural mind set, apart from well-developed 21st-century skills and international business expertise.

**At IBSM, we consider our main strengths to be:**

- Internationalization – IB aims for a globally diverse student body so students can gain insights from different experiences and perspectives, enhancing their intercultural skills. We enrolled 270 students for the 2025-2026 academic year, with 50% being international. Additionally, IBSM has an extensive network of international partners, including both industry collaborators and higher education institutions, with whom we cooperate. All IB students are required to gain international experience through at least one semester abroad, whether for an internship or a study exchange. Our international staff supports students in developing their skills and knowledge.
- Practice-based learning – IBSM has adopted the building blocks of the didactical framework Student in the Lead (SitL), which consists of five main elements: a) personalized learning; b) community learning; c) intensive personal coaching; d) experiential learning; and e) assessment as learning.
- Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS) – IBSM has a research centre, Sustainable International Business (SIB). Sustainability in business is a major theme in many elements of our study program.
- Small-scale and personalized education – as our vision states, we believe in personal guidance and knowing our students. Facilitating our students on their own path stimulates their development.

In 2019, IBSM obtained EFMD's international EPAS accreditation. In 2022, EFMD reviewed our progress in educational innovation and applied research, and reaccredited IBSM for the next three years (2022-2025). Recently, in March 2025, EFMD reviewed again our progress, and IBSM was re-accredited by EFMD for a period of 5 years (2025-2030), recognizing our progress for building an innovative and inclusive didactical environment.

## About PRME

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a global initiative supported by the United Nations, aimed at enhancing the sustainability profile of management-related education programs. As an institution of higher education involved in the development of current and future managers, we declare our commitment to advancing the implementation of the following Principles within our institution, starting with those that are most relevant to our capacities and mission. We will report on progress to all our stakeholders and exchange effective practices related to these principles with other academic institutions:

### Principle 1: Purpose

We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and work towards an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

### Principle 2: Values

We will incorporate the values of global social responsibility, as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact, into our academic activities and SitL pedagogical approach.

### Principle 3: Method

We will create frameworks regarding ESD, materials, processes, and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

### Principle 4: Research

We will engage in conceptual, applied, and empirical-based research that advances our understanding of the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental, and economic value.

### Principle 5: Partnership

We will interact with managers of business corporations to expand our understanding of their challenges in fulfilling social and environmental responsibilities and to explore joint effective approaches to addressing these challenges.

### Principle 6: Dialogue

We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations, and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global responsibility and sustainability.

## Principle 1: Purpose

We will develop the capabilities of students to become future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large, working towards an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Ethics, responsibility, and sustainability (ERS) have become integral to our core academic and societal activities. In line with the six principles of PRME, IBSM strives to continually equip our students with the latest knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to act as generators of sustainable value for businesses and society at large, and to work towards an inclusive and sustainable global economy. Regarding our own organizational behaviour, we view operating in accordance with the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact as our minimum standard. Additionally, we strive to continuously raise the bar and serve as an example for both businesses and (educational) institutions.

### Some of our achievements so far are the following:

- The IBSM's research centre SIB envisages contributing to the economic development of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion by using innovative applied research and education in the field of sustainable international business, and to encourage IB students, graduates, and businesses to further develop their ambitions in an effective and sustainable manner. This mission has been realized through applied research and education in collaboration with students, regional, national, and international stakeholders. During the last two years, SIB has offered many businesses challenges regarding circularity and sustainability in the IB context, acquired funding (at national and EU-level) for conducting applied business research in a range of industries and markets such as the construction and demolition, fabric, agribusiness and food, higher education, hospitality and tourism, and sustainable materials, among others. Moreover, offers several professionalization seminars to IBSM faculty members, organizes minors on Applied Business Sustainability for IB, Zuyd, and exchange students, and offers mentoring and support for sustainability-related initiatives at the International Business & Communication domain level, Zuyd level, and regional/national level.
- Since the 2020-2021 academic year, ERS-related aspects have become an essential part (i.e., rubric) of each student's portfolio, which reflects the four national PLOs in the IB program. Therefore, IB students must reflect on their Moments of Shine (MOS: defense of their portfolios from Year 1 – junior IB analysts - to Year 4 - graduation level 3) in terms of ERS.
- During the last two years, IBSM has developed the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and work towards an inclusive and sustainable global economy. Specifically, through the SIB research theme line Innovating Business Education, we have conducted applied educational research into designing and developing innovative pedagogical approaches for teaching sustainability-related subjects within the IBSM community. IB faculty, in their roles as business coaches and experts, play a central part in our commitment to developing resilient young business leaders with a global mindset. Their continuing professional development (CPD) has been a key focus of this research line.
- CPD activities for IBSM's faculty members' professionalization have been based on the SIB's research portfolio on education for sustainability and its research in the context of the Erasmus+ project Innovating business Education for Responsible Global Minds (IBE-ReGloMi). They are centered on education for sustainable development (ESD) within an international and intercultural global business environment, addressing the intersections between sustainability, internationalization, and social innovation and entrepreneurship. The CPD aimed to equip IBSM's faculty members with the values and tools needed to raise awareness of, and act for embedding ethics, responsibility, and sustainability (ERS) into the business challenges students address as part of the SitL problem-solving loop. The learning activities focused on touching the hearts and minds of the faculty, transforming their views on sustainability from a "nice to have" add-on for business education, to a foundational view in line with the IBSM mission and vision. In doing so, we have moved away from a "saddleback approach" to ESD and instead integrated ERS into the core of the curriculum. The integration is evidenced by the SitL Assessment Rubric (see annex?), which has been developed to ensure holistic and integrated assessment of ERS and by other educational materials supporting ERS competences. Moreover, the CPD activities were team-based, engaging all faculty and professional service staff of the school. The team-based approach supported participant engagement and created a shared knowledge and practice base for addressing ERS considerations in students' business challenges.

- SIB organized the 12th International Conference on International Business (ICIB) with the title Trends in Sustainable International Business. The conference was co-organized with other knowledge institutions in the Netherlands (CORMEC/ Wageningen University & Research; Maastricht University) and abroad (Neapolis Paphos University/ CY; University of Macedonia/GR). Approximately 50 scholars from across Europe, along with 20 IB students, participated in scholarly and policy-oriented sessions, panels, and discussions within a hybrid conference environment.

#### Key objectives:

For the coming two years IBSM aims to:

- organize 3 more scholarly, IB student-led, and industry-led conferences/events on the theme of applied business sustainability.
- Apply and acquire funding on CPD aimed to further equip IBSM's faculty members with the values and tools needed to raise awareness of, and act for embedding ethics, responsibility, and sustainability (ERS) into the business challenges students address as part of the SiTL problem-solving loop.
- enhance the attributes of an ERS-related communication strategy and culture by means of investing in new initiatives and campaigns that highlight the importance of adopting sustainable practices in everyday contacts and operations of the IBSM 's student communities.
- expand our network with scientific associations, professional lobbies, foundations, and private and governmental organizations that will help our IB students to develop business analysis skills that will serve an inclusive, digital and sustainable global economy.
- devote resources to student-led extracurricular activities on ERS-related topics of their interest via the support of Zuyd ENACTUS Association and the Sustainability Zuyd program.
- offer the "Education for Sustainable Development" workshop to all IB student communities. This workshop has been prepared by the participating IB coaches/experts, and researchers in SIB.



## Principle 2: Values

We will incorporate into our academic activities and SiTL pedagogical approach the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Mrs. Manon Niesten (IB program manager) and Prof. Dr. Nikos Kalogeras (head of the research center SIB), have been in office since 2019 as ERS coordinators to monitor, control and ensure that ERS-related topics are combined and taught thoroughly throughout workshops, flash lectures, and guest lectures and ensure that IB students at all levels account for and reflect on the ERS-related aspects in their business challenges. Also, Mrs. Eefje Willems (IB program manager) has joined this effort since 2022. Below we describe the ERS code of conduct and the integration of Inner Development Goals (IDG) with the IBSM's didactical approach SiTL.

#### ERS Code of Conduct

IBSM developed a code of conduct that aims to embed sustainability-related values in the IBSM's organizational culture and its daily activities and operations. For example, campaigns have been launched for IB faculty and students to avoid consumption of energy and materials: carefully considering their travel mode for external activities, reducing the use of paper to an absolute minimum, decreasing the use of lifts within the premises of Zuyd, promoting using coffee mugs instead of paper and plastic based coffee cups, and strictly following food/ packaging waste management practices. A prominent example is the organization of a Laser-game for IBSM students, aiming to familiarize them with waste management spots (bins) all over the locations of the Brusselseweg 150 (Maastricht) building, wherein the IBSM is hosted, which was held last October (see photos below). Moreover, SIB has developed an ESD training program for IB and Zuyd coaches/experts (e.g., Creating a Sustainable Mindset; Sustainability Problem Loop) on how to internalize the concept and practice of sustainability, as well as conduct research in the field of managerial decision-making regarding sustainable international business behavior. These training programs aim to professionalize IB coaches/experts, update them with recent industrial trends in business sustainability, and enable them to disseminate this knowledge in the international communities of learning and practice of the IB academy.

Finally, SIB has created the Junior Research Team (JRT) that consists of IB students who act as research assistants in real-life (applied) research projects on ERS and ESD.

#### Integrating SiTL & IDGs

During the last two academic years, we have been continuously incorporating into our academic activities and SiTL pedagogical approach the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Specifically, we integrate both the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) into our IB education and research. While the SDGs provide a global framework for tackling urgent societal and environmental challenges, the IDGs highlight the personal and interpersonal qualities that enable individuals and organizations to bring these ambitions to life. By embedding both dimensions in our work, we prepare students and professionals not only to understand sustainability challenges but also to develop the inner capacities required to drive meaningful change.

We believe that transformation begins with leadership from within. Our approach is guided by the principles of leading one-self, leading others, and leading an organization. The IDGs enhance this journey by emphasizing personal growth, awareness, resilience, and compassion as foundational elements for sustainable leadership. Change on the societal level cannot take root without individuals who are equipped to reflect, adapt, and act with integrity. In this way, the IDGs serve as a valuable addition to the UN's sustainability agenda, complementing the SDGs by addressing the inner dimension of leadership and development.

This focus is closely aligned with the IBSM's mission. Training resilience is explicitly emphasized. Within the national (Dutch) IB

framework, "managing self" is one of the four central learning outcomes. By incorporating the IDGs into our curriculum and research, we enable students to cultivate the self-awareness, balance, and resilience they need to thrive in complex, uncertain environments. Recent research conducted by de Vries et al., (2025) has revealed these competencies and skills are realized by IB students (see figure 1 please). Specifically, self-connection seems to be related with positive affirmations and intentions as well as with mindfulness, which, in turn, correlates with emotional regulation, and results in stress resilience mindsets.

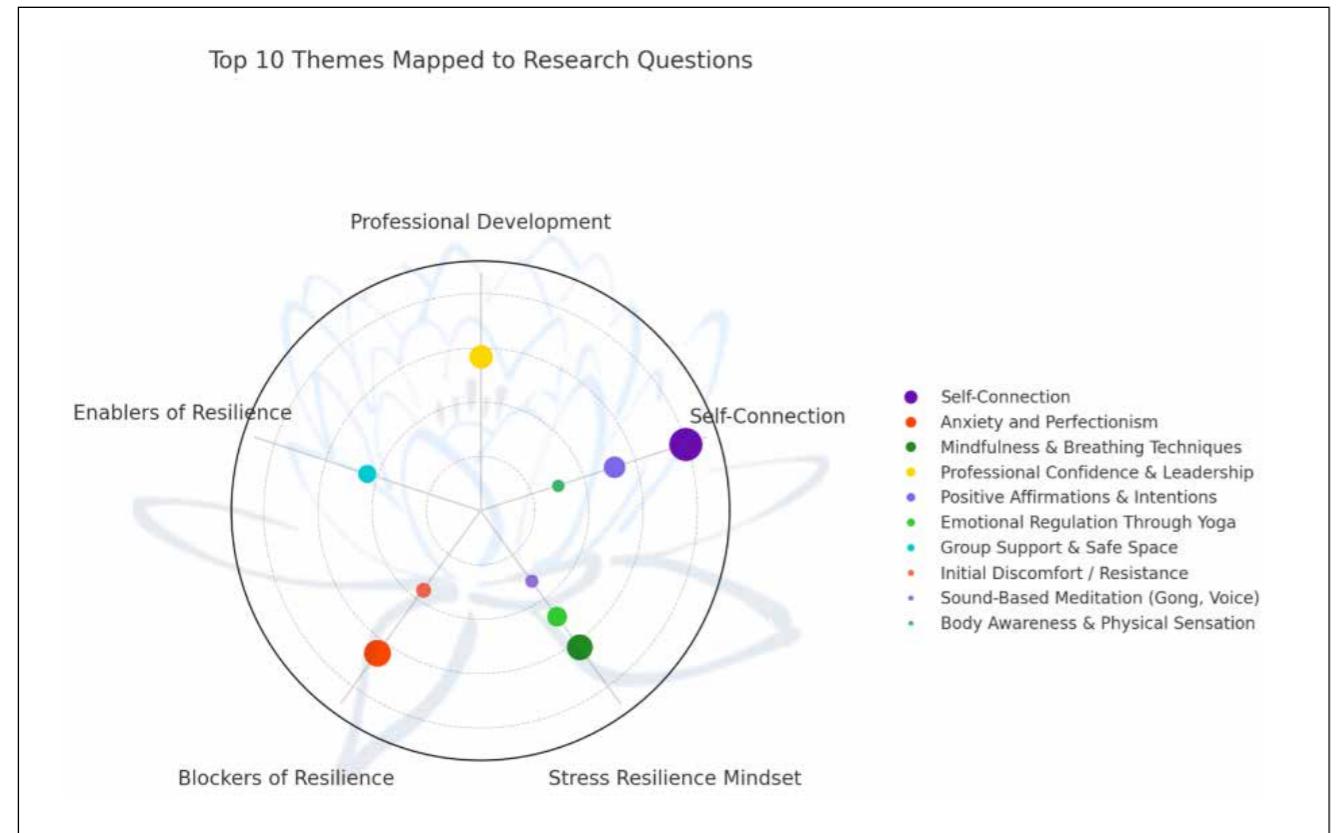


Figure 1: SIB research on IB students' Resilience/Personal Development.  
Source: De Vries et al (2025)

This integrated approach ensures that future leaders are not only equipped with knowledge and skills, but also with the inner strength and ethical grounding to create sustainable impact.

#### Key objectives

In the coming 2 years, we plan to:

- roll out of an IDGs training course for all IBSM's stakeholders (i.e., students, coaches/experts, collaborating industry managers and business experts).
- enrich the code of conduct - in collaboration with the students' associations (e.g., Enactus Maastricht) - that aims to embed and integrate sustainability-related values

## Principle 3: Method

We will create frameworks regarding ESD, materials, processes, and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

IBSM has been developing frameworks related to ESD, materials, processes, and environments that facilitate effective learning experiences for responsible leadership in various ways and through multiple methods. Below we describe, in brief, the SiTL didactical approach and we explain two other major methods employed by the IBSM during the last 2 years (i.e., gamification and transscientific training).

### Student in the Lead (SiTL)

IB's innovative pedagogical approach, SiTL, is based on learning from practice in order to continuously be linked to relevant knowledge and skills in the external IB environment. It fosters responsibility by focusing on critical thinking skills, cultural awareness, personal leadership, an international and sustainable mindset, all linked to business. Our students work in diverse vertical communities, as we believe that learning takes place when we interact, share, challenge and support each other. That is, the implementation of the SiTL didactical approach allows students to be highly aware of real-life sustainability challenges and interact (almost) daily with business/sustainability managers of corporates and other stakeholders. Furthermore, students are challenged to develop skills and acquire practice-based experience in thinking and acting responsibly, without overlooking the tools of working and management necessary to create the international business of tomorrow's sustainable planet.

The SiTL approach incorporates the five main features listed below.

- Personalised learning - students shape their own learning path within the frameworks provided by IB.
- Community learning - students develop their knowledge and expertise in an internationally diverse communities of peers, coaches, researchers, and professionals.
- Intensive (personal) coaching - to facilitate students in their individual learning process. Students' personal coaches focus on process coaching, while business coaches offer content-related coaching.
- Experiential learning - students take on real-life challenges to reach their own individual learning goals.
- Assessment as learning - in the form of continuous rich feedback to support our students' development.

### Gamification in Business Studies

Through a co-creating and highly interactive process with external stakeholders such as scholars and students from other knowledge institutions, our IB teaching and research staff have embarked on collaboration and conducted research projects on how gamification can be used to enhance awareness of knowledge in IB education. We aim to continuously evaluate the impact of gamification on awareness and understanding among business students. Specifically, we aimed to measure the difference in awareness between those using a gamified approach and those learning through traditional methods, assess student engagement, and gather feedback from participants.

For example, one of our projects has focused on the development of a card-game to enhance knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs. Another project, in collaboration with Maastricht University, has focused on financial themes (financial statement analysis and transactions). Gamification refers to the incorporation of game elements into non-game contexts, such as learning. It promotes active engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving, which can be especially beneficial for understanding complex considered topics such as business sustainability and corporate finance.

### Transscientific Training

IBSM has continuously attempted to challenge IB students with pushing their boundaries across disciplines and sciences. Such an example, it is the collaboration of IBSM with Academy of Built Environment and the Smart Urban Redesign research center in the framework of the project BuildUPSpeed (BUPS). This is Horizon2020 funded project by the LIFE Program of the EU Commission, which aims to increase the volume and depth of deep retrofitting of the building stock to meet the climate goals. Five countries are covered in the BUPS project, namely: Netherlands, France, Austria, Italy and Spain.

IBSM coaches, experts, and students were asked to contribute to the business elements of the Dutch project involving the setting up of a prototype pop-up factory to be (located) in the city Heerlen at the southern borders of the Netherlands. The idea behind pop-up factories is to bring manufacturing, assembly and services related to the building sector closer to the construction site for reducing the need to transport materials and, hence, reducing costs and emissions. This collaboration has revealed crucial information for establishing, pricing, and promoting the services (e.g., assembly) provided by the pop-up factories, which were found to be a key strength of the Dutch construction industry.

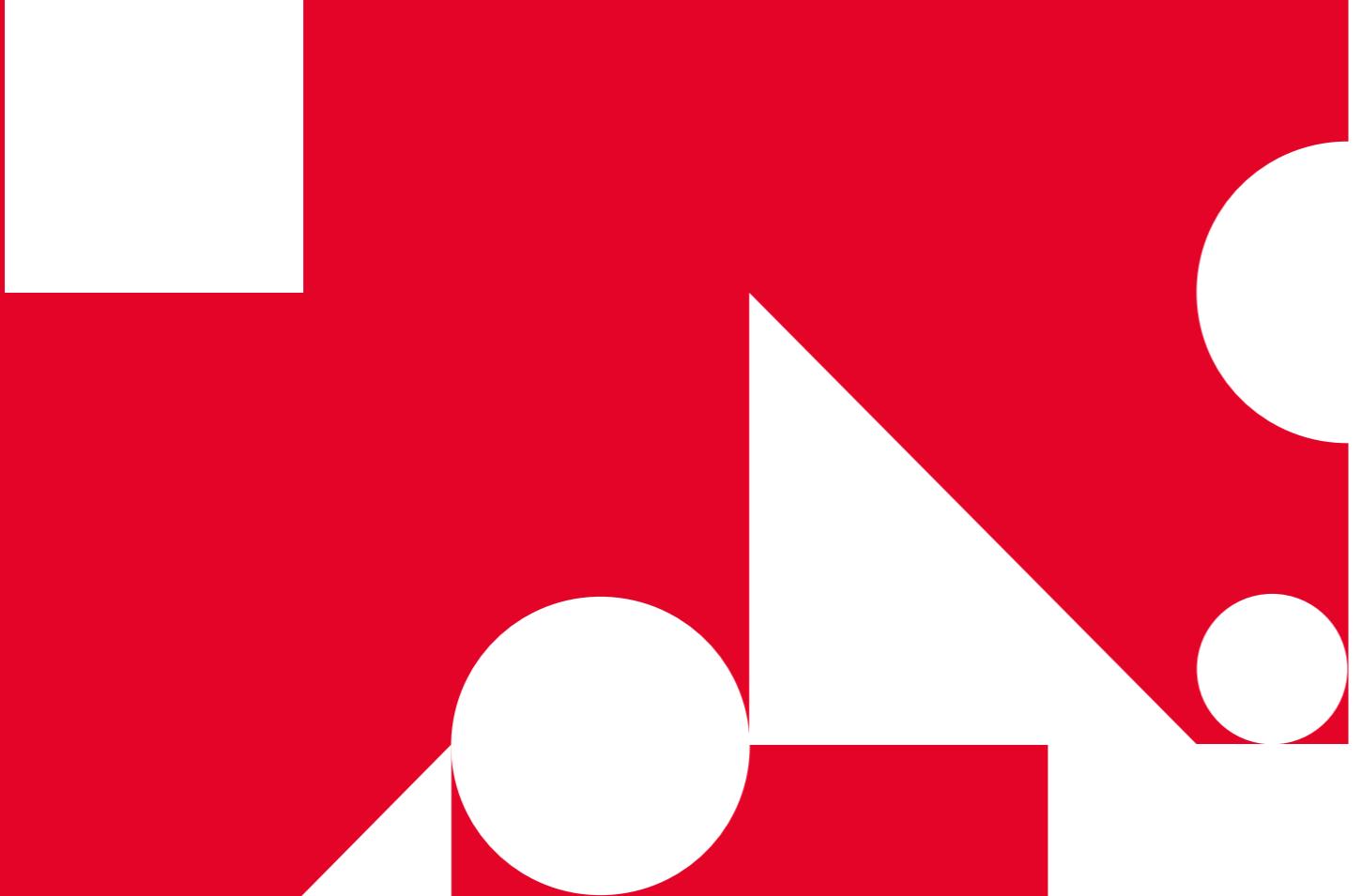
Several business challenges were provided to IB students, Erasmus, exchange students, as well as students from other domains and academies of Zuyd, who participated in the IBSM's minors on Applied Business Sustainability and IB vertical communities of learning and practice. All these students had the opportunity to engage with experts and coaches across Zuyd domains (i.e., business, production engineering, architecture), real market experts (e.g., real estate agents, owners/managers of construction companies, and customers) and, therefore, acquire knowledge and skills in a truly transscientific educational setting while exposed to real business life decision contexts.

### Key objectives:

In the coming 2 years we aim to:

- develop further inspiring learning environments for our community approach: active learning spaces that stimulate working together in diverse groups, contact with the outside business world, and the use of new technologies.
- promote interdisciplinary work across various fields with other study programs and research centres within Zuyd (Future of Food, Global Minds at Work; Professional Communication in a Digitalizing Society; Material Sciences; Smart Urban Redesign Development) and outside Zuyd (e.g. Maastricht Institute of Sustainability; Commodity Risk Management Expertise Center/ CORMEC at Wageningen University & Research) on the topics of business sustainability and circular economy.





## Principle 4: Research

We will engage in conceptual and applied and empirical-based research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

SIB's research objectives revolve around the design and development of sustainable business strategies in the fields of sustainable organization and management, marketing, finance, and supply chain management. The implementation of these strategies is expected to influence and enable a holistic transformation (re-defining and engineering) of businesses' strategic, tactical and operational focus. The aim of this transformation will result in the formation of innovative champion strategies that will enhance IB's pedagogical approach, SitL, as well as support the economic, social, and environmental fabric of SMEs' sustainable behaviour and ESD in the IB context. SIB researchers have worked on the following research projects that are interconnected in scale and position in the IB environment:

### Driving Sustainability in Hospitality SMEs

The hospitality sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), plays a crucial role in addressing global environmental challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and waste generation. This research project has focused on the adoption of circular economy (CE) practices in SMEs within the hospitality sector of Limburg, the Netherlands. The region, known for its thriving tourism and culinary heritage, presents unique opportunities for implementing sustainable business models that prioritize resource optimization, material circularity, and waste reduction.

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combines quantitative data from surveys distributed to hospitality SMEs with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews and case studies. The survey assesses current awareness, attitudes, and practices regarding CE, as well as the barriers faced by SMEs in adopting these principles. Key obstacles identified include financial limitations, knowledge gaps, and the lack of technological resources. Interviews with key stakeholders provide deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities for integrating CE practices, while case studies of successful implementations highlight best practices and success factors.

### SMEs as Members of Agricultural Cooperatives

We have been engaged in conceptual, applied, and empirical-based research that advances our understanding of the role, dynamics, and impact of SMEs as members of cooperatives in the creation of sustainable social, environmental, and economic value. Specifically, this project has been addressing the growing complexities in cooperative governance arising from increasing member heterogeneity. By leveraging AI-driven agent-based modeling (ABM) combined with multi-method empirical data—including surveys, interviews, and longitudinal econometric analysis—we aim to simulate and analyze governance dynamics within agricultural cooperatives in Germany and the Netherlands. Our research seeks to uncover how diverse member characteristics shape decision-making, conflict resolution, and governance effectiveness, thereby influencing cooperative resilience and sustainability. Ultimately, this work will provide actionable insights for cooperative managers and policymakers to design more inclusive and adaptive governance frameworks that promote sustainable rural development and enhance the robustness of cooperatives within the European Union.

### Innovating Business Education

As part of our commitment to advancing responsible management education, our institution participated in the Erasmus+ collaborative partnership project Innovating Business Education for Responsible Global Minds (IBE-ReGloMi), in collaboration with five European universities, business schools, and EFMD Global.

This research initiative investigated the graduate attributes that employers and students consider essential for supporting green and digital transitions towards sustainable business models. The identified graduate attributes (see figure 2 please) informed the development of guidelines for intended learning outcomes, which adopted a transdisciplinary approach to integrating ethics, responsibility, sustainability (ERS), and international dimensions into programme and module learning outcomes.



Figure 2: IBE-ReGloMi Graduate Attributes supporting Responsible Global Minds.  
Source: Faget, Halwas, Gregersen-Hermans (2024)

Building on these guidelines, the project explored experiential learning methodologies and good practice examples for embedding the IBE-ReGloMi attributes into the curriculum. Five key principles for innovative sustainability learning in an international and intercultural context were identified: Emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving, integrating theory and practice, focusing on real-world relevance, using active learning strategies, and highlighting interdisciplinary, holistic thinking and diverse perspectives. The IBE-ReGloMi research outcomes were translated into a CPD programme for faculty at each of the partner institutions, designed to stimulate critical dialogue among peers on innovating curricula and courses/modules for green business transformations.

This project has exemplified our active engagement in international research networks and our contribution to advancing responsible management education through collaborative research, curriculum innovation, and faculty development.

#### Workshops on Research-based Consulting Skills

In fostering cross-university collaboration to strengthen business research skills among IB students, SIB has actively organized a series of research-based business research skills workshops offered to IB students at all levels. These workshops bring IBSM coaches/experts with scholars from UNU-MERIT (Maastricht, NL) and School of Business & Economics/Maastricht University (Maastricht, NL) to train IB students on transdisciplinary research and encourage the use of emerging technologies and digital tools - such as Artificial Intelligence - in order to accelerate and enhance research capabilities among IB fresh professionals, with a strong focus on SDGs. This workshop series on research-based consulting skills has been offered 3 times per academic year to all IB students since the academic year 2024-25.

#### Key objectives:

- Through SIB's collaboration with other research centres in the knowledge center Business Innovation for Societal Impact / Zuyd, the capacity of funding efforts, business challenges' co-creation as well as participation in research projects and activities within and outside Zuyd borders will be enhanced. SIB researchers, IB coaches/experts as well as IB students will have even more opportunities to collaborate, co-create, and conduct innovative applied business research from a multidisciplinary perspective. Interaction with real-life stakeholders (e.g., entrepreneurs, governmental and regional agencies) will also be further developed. Thus, the research-mindedness and the interaction with the real-world of international business of SIB/IB members will be further enhanced, and IB students will have more opportunities to work on and participate in projects /business challenges beyond disciplinary and scientific boundaries.
- Based on the acquired expertise of SIB members in sustainable marketing, sustainable finance, and sustainable supply chain management, the aim is to capitalise on the existing collaborations with other Zuyd research centres and knowledge institutions in the Euregion, e.g. Maastricht University, Aachen University, Thomas Moore University of Applied Sciences, CORMEC/ Wageningen University & Research, Maastricht University, and other Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands and abroad in order to expand our study and gain crucial insights into how knowledge transfer and exchange regarding international students' learning and SMEs sustainable behaviour emerges across cultures and nations.



## Principle 5: Partnership

We will interact with managers of business corporations to expand our understanding of their challenges in fulfilling social and environmental responsibilities and to explore joint effective approaches to addressing these challenges.

IBSM has been continuously enhancing its interactions with owners/managers of business corporations to enable them meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective and efficient approaches to meeting these challenges. Also, IBSM further expand its connection and academic collaborations with other knowledge institutions within and outside the Dutch borders. Below we describe all these partnership types.

### Business Partnership Layers

At IBSM, IB students learn by engaging with real-world business assignments provided by our partners. To strengthen these collaborations, we have introduced three layers of partnerships that enable diverse forms of interaction with our program. First, strategic partnerships connect us with key corporate stakeholders who commit to long-term collaboration (e.g. Medtronic, Fagro & Watersley). Second, direct partnerships emerge from the professional networks of IBSM staff, linking our students with trusted business contacts (e.g., Boston Scientific, Brightlands, Nike and Praktech). And third, indirect partnerships are built-up through student connections, extending our reach into broader industry contexts (e.g. DSM, Wine and WKR). Together, these layers create a structured framework that enables students to tackle meaningful business challenges while expanding our institutional ties with the business and societal communities.

### IBSM's Living Lab

During the last two academic years, we laid the groundwork for the IBSM Living Lab as a co-creation process with external partners, other living labs within Zuyd, and most importantly, with our students. In the IB Living Lab Challenge, 20 students from five different communities collaborated as junior consultants to design the first elements of the Lab. Their contributions included stakeholder maps, platform mock-ups, and initial branding ideas, which provided us with a strong foundation for the Living Lab's development.

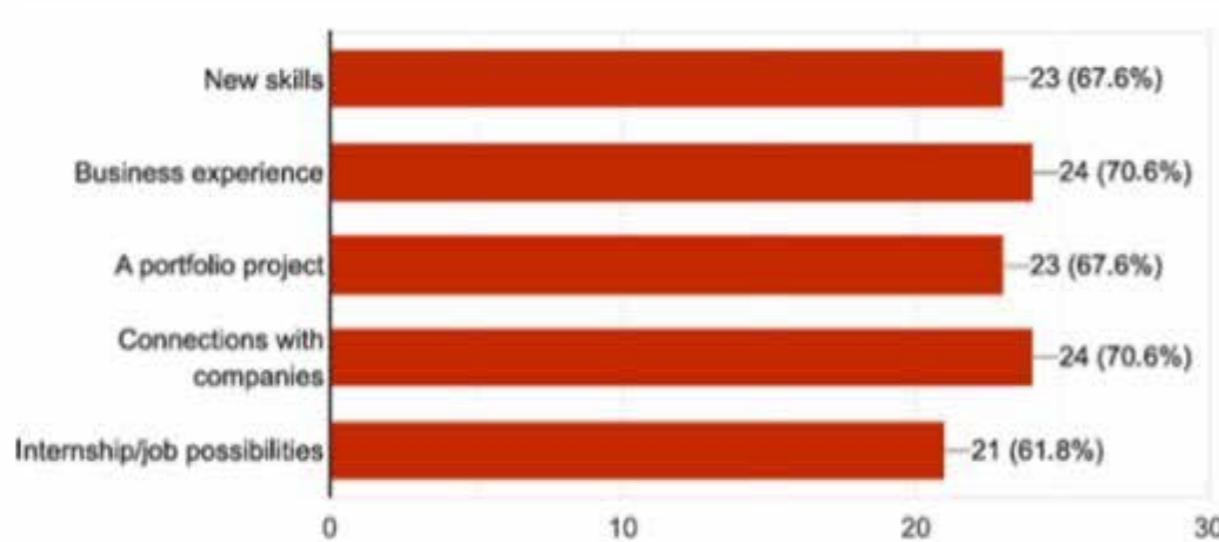


Figure 3: Expected Outcomes for IB Students from Participating in a Living Lab  
Source: SIB survey (2025)



The IBSM Living Lab aims to provide students with their first consultancy experience while connecting with SMEs and sustainability-oriented partners in the Euregion, thereby creating an applied innovation platform that bridges education, research, and practice. Based on the results of a research survey conducted by SIB, IB students indicated that the creation of a living lab will offer them new skills, business experience, and connections with business, among others (see figure 3, please).

### Academic Collaborations

SIB collaborates with various research partners at the national level (e.g., Maastricht University, Utrecht University, Wageningen University & Research) and internationally (e.g., Leeds Beckett University, UK; Aristotle University, Greece; Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies/CIHEAM, France) on ERS-related topics. A shared interest is the sustainable behavior of SMEs and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) from a multicultural perspective. Additionally, SIB leverages its partnerships and has secured external funding through participation in international consortia at the national level (e.g., SIA: funding platform for Universities of Applied Sciences; NWO: the National Scientific Organization of the Netherlands) and has led or participated in European funding projects such as Erasmus+ and Erasmus mobility initiatives like the IBE-ReGloMi project. Furthermore, SIB is involved in the "Circularity Group" led by the Material Sciences research center within Zuyd, as well as the cluster of economic research centers at Zuyd. Engagement with social and beta scientists further enhances dialogue and knowledge transfer from a highly transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspective. SIB also participates in discussions related to ERS topics, especially focusing on sustainable behavior in SMEs, through the national platform of IB Professors in the Netherlands. These meetings facilitate discussion of recent trends in applied research and society, promoting knowledge exchange.

### Key objectives:

In the coming 2 years, we aim to:

- continue exploring new opportunities (we are currently in the initial contact phase with Microsoft, Medlands, Boston Scientific. among others).
- Develop new educational and applied research collaborations, potential partnerships, memberships with regional (e.g. Province of Limburg; Maastricht City Hall), national (e.g. SDG House Network; The Hague Humanity Hub; Maastricht Institute of Sustainability; JIN Climate & Sustainability; Friends of Earth International; Energy & Sustainability; Global Compact Network The Netherlands) and international knowledge institutes, associations and governmental agencies (e.g. UN Global Contact; Association for Sustainability in Business, World Business Council for Sustainable Development).

## Principle 6: Dialogue

**We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global responsibility and sustainability**

At IBSM, we have fostered meaningful exchange between business, academia, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability. Dialogue is not only embraced as a pedagogical method but also as a foundational mindset that underpins our commitment to responsible management education. Dr. Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans who coordinates the Erasmus+ project IBE-ReGloMi (Innovating Business Education for Responsible Global Minds) has exemplified how cross-sector and cross-cultural dialogue can shape future-oriented, value-driven business education.

Throughout this project, IBSM co-designed and facilitated exchanges between students, educators, and business professionals from five European partner institutions and the EFMD Global. These dialogues were instrumental in co-creating a shared graduate profile and a vision for innovative pedagogy, ensuring that the voices of key stakeholders were embedded in the curriculum development process. The outcomes were disseminated through six co-developed training modules, which were shared with at least 15 academic staff members across partner institutions. Stakeholder engagement was also deepened through five national roundtable dialogues involving students, faculty, and company representatives, reinforcing mutual understanding and collaborative ownership of the educational innovation process.

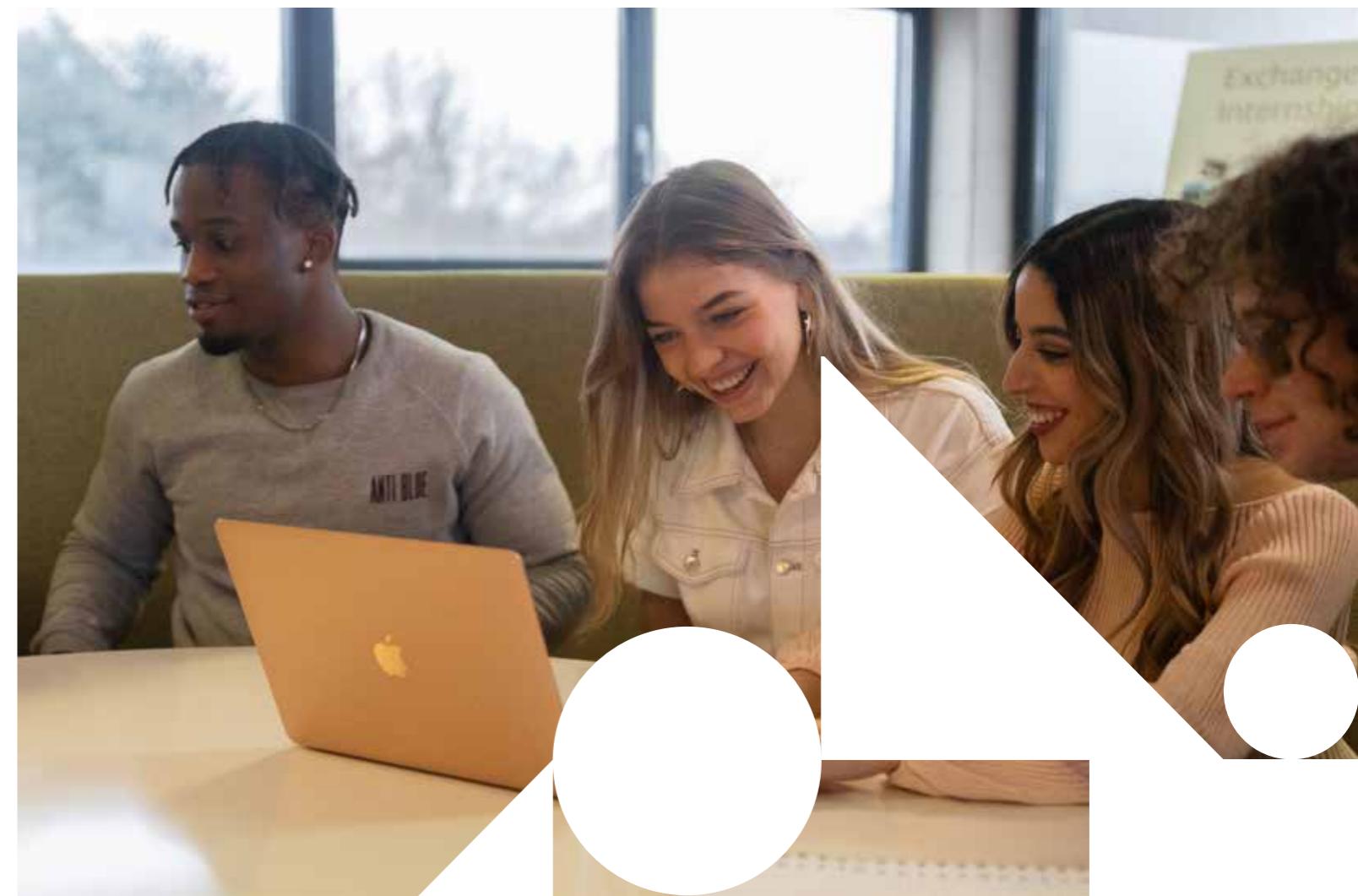
Dialogue extended to international platforms, most notably through three interactive workshops delivered at the EAIE Conferences in 2023, 2024, and 2025, engaging global educators in discussions on curriculum transformation, ethics, sustainability, and whole-person learning. We also embedded dialogue in more experiential formats—such as our “Internationalisation by Bike” initiative. This cross-border journey through the Euregion, undertaken with students and colleagues from TH Köln and partner companies, created space for peer-to-peer exchange on sustainability, intercultural understanding, and mobility, both literally and symbolically crossing boundaries.

Another key example of structured dialogue was coordinating a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) in Maastricht with our IBE-ReGloMi partners from Germany, France, Poland, and Romania. This initiative combined virtual collaboration with an in-person week, bringing together students, educators, and company representatives from all IBE-ReGloMi partner institutions. Participants collaboratively developed sustainable solutions to real-world business challenges through a facilitated, intercultural dialogue process.

These ongoing efforts culminated in the IBE-ReGloMi Final Conference (June 2025, Maastricht), where we welcomed 180 participants from higher education institutions around the world. Through keynote presentations, interactive workshops, taster sessions, and panel discussions with students, academics, and external stakeholders, we shared our training materials and examined the broader implications of our project outcomes for sustainability-focused business education. Finally, the dialogue around the Living Lab is continually shaped through exchanges with existing initiatives such as Zuyd’s Circularity Lab in Weert (led by Prof. Dr. Danielle Twardy) and the Urban Living Lab (research center for Smart Urban Redesign/Zuyd). These interactions help us learn from established practices while expanding our network. We also prioritize student voices by maintaining ongoing feedback loops and co-creation opportunities. Starting this academic year, we have launched a pilot collaboration with CHILL (Chemelot Innovation and Learning Labs/Zuyd) to explore mutual coaching, joint student projects, and quality benchmarks. In this way, the Living Lab promotes dialogue among students, colleagues, and external partners, aiming to advance applied research in sustainability and enhance our contribution to responsible business education.

Collectively, these initiatives show our belief that meaningful dialogue is vital for developing responsible leaders and advancing the SDGs through higher education. At IBSM, we aim to ensure every learning experience is rooted in shared reflection, intercultural understanding, and collaborative inquiry—connecting disciplines, sectors, and societies. Some key objectives for the upcoming and current academic years are to:

- Organize a European conference on Circular Economy and Sustainable Strategies in June 2026, where scholars, students, practitioners, and policymakers will engage in meaningful discussions on how to decarbonize business operations in the value chain.
- Implement the first phase of the SIB-IB Living Lab operations, which will further support and expand the IB-SIB network with other interested parties, such as knowledge institutions, government and regional agencies, scientific and professional associations, among others. It will also seek collaborations to develop applied knowledge that helps young IB professionals integrate sustainable business practices into their daily work.
- Facilitate more IB-SIB coaches and experts to gain ERS knowledge and skills by participating in the (online) Earth Charter certificate program on ESD offered by the University of Peace (Costa Rica).

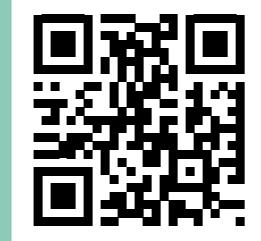


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Zuyd Hogeschool. Het begint met jou.