

6th Regional Integrity Week – Alliance for Integrity

CONVERSATION WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: MULTISTAKEHOLDER ALLIANCE FOR A BUSINESS EDUCATION WITH INTEGRITY

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27 October, 2021 at 12:00 for Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, and at 14:00 for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Summary

This session was one of the most disruptive and innovative proposals among the Sixth Regional Integrity Week. On the one hand, it encouraged the participation of university students, connecting integrity in education with business and private sector perspective, with the involvement of compliance officers as conversation drivers and moderators enabling a great dynamic and regional and inter-generational exchange format. As the starting point of the session, students introduced themselves to the other participants, emphasising that companies and entrepreneurs can receive a lot of value from youth, as they offer innovative ideas and positive change, which is essentially part of their spirit and motivation. After a great discussion, the session ended leaving a lot of reflection but also some specific points.

Main challenges

- Transparency, anti-corruption, co-responsibility and integrity are directly related to education. At the personal level they are values that guide people's behaviour. At the organisational level they have to strengthen and guide decision-making and corporate culture.
- Transparency creates consistency and credibility, without transparency there is no economic sustainability, this is the basis of respect for society. Individual actions can have a lot of impact, but much more when several people come together for a greater cause, it is a major challenge to shape collective actions within university students and business.
- Education allows people to develop personal and professionally, in an integral way in various aspects of their lives, as human beings, as members of society, acquiring tools for their growth. It is an indispensable factor; a great global challenge is the fact that everyone should have the same opportunities and tools. These elements are included in the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda.
- Access to education is key factor for development, but besides access, it is very important to ensure that most students finish their programmes to avoid high rates of scholar desertion.
- Some inclusion and management mechanisms can be improved to foster university students start their professional careers and companies, at the meantime, benefit from all the ideas and talent they can contribute with.

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TITLE SESSION

Best practices shared

- Ethical intelligence is closely linked to consciousness. It operates as the ability of an individual to discern information in their environment to make the most ethical decision possible. It does imply to analyse and see the most sensitive variables around a dilemma and considering the big picture before making decisions. Moving from being ethical to being intelligently ethical is an innovative best practice shared during the event.
- Times have changed, education needs to face problems in order to integrate the needs of society. Education must have a sustainable look, that will allow us to understand education with practice: “learning to learn”.

Future recommendations

- The pandemic demonstrated how important it resulted to have internet connection in order to be able to assist to online education modalities. However, it also turned out evident that students with no internet connection could not study, creating inequalities. Therefore, some students stress the relevance of promoting universal connectivity.
- Holistic education and sustainability are the basis of development for this century. Education is a globalizing element beyond countries and frontiers. We are individuals sharing a common world and must be part of the solution of common problems as well.
- Companies appreciate soft skills in their workers. Universities should provide enough tools and knowledge to learn and develop some abilities such as team working, leadership, effective communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, time management, as that can improve their job prospective. An ethical professional should see and treat others as he/she would like to be treated. Personal integrity is very important, professional success can be compatible with an impact on society.
- People are usually linked at the level of values with their companies. Strategic alliances between companies to fight corruption and partnerships are important, there are economic and social repercussions. It helps companies to be responsive to their stakeholders.
- The private sector can contribute to academia and vice versa.
- Corruption affects us all, but through education it can be prevented.