

I DO Internship / I DO Leadership

Faculty: RSM
February 2022

Description of the course

The *I DO Project* provides second year (I)BA students with the opportunity to contribute to societal challenges by connecting them with NGOs. From experiential learning, different student teams cooperate with an NGO and help define the NGO's specific challenges based upon its current needs and design and implement an effective solution.

A workshop structure helps students prepare for their work with the NGO. In addition, the BA2 student teams are supervised by an I DO coach. I DO coaches are third year (I)BA students following the Leadership Course. In the Leadership Course, the I DO coaches are prepared with knowledge, skills, and tools to coach the BA2 student teams during the I DO project.

What have we learned about impact-driven education in practice?

The I DO evaluation presented the following insights:

- **Students value the opportunity to work with real-time problems.**
Students from both courses are enthusiastic about the opportunity to apply theory to practice. They indicate that working with authentic problems and stakeholders' involvement made the course different to traditional courses.
- **Impact-driven education helps students advance skills they find important for their future career: problem solving skills, critical thinking and communication.**
Problem solving skills were found most important by students. In problem solving, students first analyze the problem before thinking about the solution. This is also an important step in the I DO internship course. Communication, another essential soft skill, was impacted by the student's responsibility to communicate with the NGO and their coach. Participants from the I DO leadership and I DO internship appreciate that the course teaches them skills and information that can be used outside the classroom and that they learn how to deal with real stakeholders.
- **Impact-driven education can help to build a student's professional identity by increasing the understanding of society and helping to find a field of interest.**
Students think that the internship course will help them develop their professional identity. Work motivation, the reason for choosing a particular profession, is the most important aspect they want to build during this course. Students indicate that working with real NGOs allowed them to explore different societal problems and understand how to utilize their professional skills to design environmental, economic, and social solutions.

- **Being coached by other students was overall a positive experience for students.** The data of the I DO internship course provides a positive view on students' collaboration with student coaches from the third year. Coaches were found enthusiastic and easy to approach.
- **The balance between theory and practice is important when working on impact-driven education or other experiential learning methods.** Students of the I Do leadership preferred the more practical activities the course offered. An example is the coaching hubs, where learning activities took place to facilitate communication between the I DO teams.

What are next steps to increase the impact capacity of students in similar learning environments?

- The course evaluation showed that more interventions were needed to further increase the student's self-regulation skills. We can stimulate students to take control of their learning process by setting clear learning goals. Students can monitor these with (student) coaches and by engaging in reflection activities like journals or feedback sessions.
- Students indicated practical restrictions in communicating with NGO's. Mostly they think they were caused by Covid-19 situation but also some NGO's were located far away. It is advised to invest in long-term relationships with local NGO's to collect societal challenges for courses. To further improve the engagement between stakeholders and students it is recommended asking stakeholders to set up a briefing containing the problems they face, goals of the collaboration, the resources they have, communication channels to use with the students and how involved they intend to be.
- Practical guidance is needed for student coaches. Implementing informal moments for the coaches to discuss their experiences is recommended. The practical coaching hubs were experienced very positively and could possibly replace a lecture structure.
- It is interesting to experiment with and evaluate student coaching models. Many learnings can be taken from this course. Still, overall, the experience was positive, and it was observed that coaching can potentially be a mutually beneficial situation that might also relieve some of the pressure of teachers in impact-driven education.

Want to know more? contact the team

Research and Evaluation

Eldris Con Aguilar
Manon Koopman
Vincent van Houte

Learning Innovators IATC

Merel Lammers
Joe (Giuseppe) Binetti

Contributions Impact at the Core

Impact at the Core's contribution to the I DO project was as follows:

- Designing the course structure (learning objectives, impact workshops and assessment) together with the I DO academic development team for 2020-2021.
- Monitoring the interaction between the I DO Project, the Leadership Course, and the academic development team.
- Implementing and testing the Riipen platform to facilitate efficient online cooperation between the NGO and the student teams.