Global Integrity Education project

Good Practices Guide on Enhancing Business Integrity through Education

This Guide was developed on the basis of the implementation of the UNODC Global Integrity Education project in Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan
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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Companies are being challenged to create effective business integrity and ethics programmes to help improve market access, improve their reputation, increase customer loyalty, and attract and retain talented employees. However, successful business integrity efforts must go beyond legal and institutional approaches and transform the attitudes of company management and employees.

University level education on integrity and ethics plays a crucial role in shaping the ethical mindsets of future leaders and citizens. Yet, university curricula and the potential for business-academia collaboration still need to be fully harnessed to build the capacity of youth as future ethical business leaders.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Integrity Education project addressed these gaps through an innovative approach that helps foster ethical decision-making by private sector employees and empowers future business leaders. By nurturing a dialogue between academia and the private sector on business integrity, the project aimed to equip young graduates with ethical mindsets at the start of their careers in the private sector, expose them early to ethical dilemmas they may later face during their professional lives and empower them to become a driving force for ethical business.

The Global Integrity Education project, funded by the Siemens Integrity Initiative, was implemented in Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan between 2019 and 2023. The project promoted dialogue between academia and the private sector in the three countries, resulting in the co-creation and collaborative teaching of new education materials localized to the anti-corruption and business integrity contexts. Moreover, the ethical mindsets and decision-making of the university students who were taught on the materials have been strengthened as evaluated by the pilot impact assessment conducted through the project, and now they have the skills and knowledge to apply their learning to their future workplaces.
What is the Good Practice Guide about?

This Guide builds on the knowledge, experiences and results from the UNODC Global Integrity Education project. This Guide presents challenges identified in UNODC’s work on anti-corruption and education such as limited access to validated teaching materials and limited collaboration between business and academia on business integrity education. The guide further presents tried-and-tested solutions that were developed with stakeholders under the UNODC Global Integrity Education project to address these challenges.

The Guide is intended to be a reference document on strengthening business integrity through education and the collaborative engagement of the private sector and academia. It is expected to be used by UNODC and other technical assistance providers. It can also serve as a reference guide for various stakeholders, including academia, the private sector, the public sector, civil society and youth.

Structure of the Guide

This Guide is divided into two parts. The first section looks at some of the challenges of business integrity education, innovative approaches and/or solutions that can be applied to overcome such challenges, as well as some key achievements from implementing such solutions through the UNODC Global Integrity Education project in Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan, respectively. The second section presents a set of recommendations on implementing a project similar to the UNODC Global Integrity Education project in other countries, as well as further UNODC resources that can be used for this purpose.
Challenges and good practices in relation to business integrity education

A. Limited access in universities to contextualized integrity educational tools and resources

University education programmes either lack or have limited access to tools and resources on integrity education. This situation hinders the teaching of such programmes and, in turn, creates a low level of awareness of ethical considerations in future workplaces of today’s students. In addition to the limited tools or resources available, many teaching materials do not take into account the local context and landscapes, which is essential to enhancing teaching methodologies. It is also important to strengthen the capacity of lecturers to effectively deliver lessons on anti-corruption, integrity and ethics to students.

UNODC learnings

» Using a collaborative approach, develop and localize available UNODC university integrity, ethics and anti-corruption modules alongside key stakeholders (academia and business practitioners).

» Localize the modules by including examples from the local anti-corruption context and real case studies on actual corruption risks in the target industries.

» Conduct a validation process with stakeholders before publishing the modules. This also encourages ownership and use of the tools and resources.

» Build the capacity of university lecturers to teach the modules.

» Provide online access to the tools and resources.

» The impact of teaching on students’ ethical decision-making should be monitored and evaluated, and teaching should be adjusted accordingly.

1 As measured by the “Defining Issues Test” (DIT) developed by the Centre for Ethical Development, University of Alabama (https://ethicaldevelopment.ua.edu) and qualitative self-reflection surveys.
Key achievements

» 16 localized and UNODC-validated university integrity, ethics and anti-corruption modules were developed as teaching resources in all three implementing countries of the project.

» 3 localized, self-paced e-learning courses tailored to lecturers in Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan were also created to build their understanding of the modules and of innovative teaching methods.

» 395 lecturers from 18 universities of the implementing countries were trained to deliver the UNODC university modules to students. All localized modules can be accessed online via the UNODC Business Integrity Portal.

» Each localized module was developed in collaboration with national experts from academia and the private sector and validated by key stakeholders in universities in each implementing country.

» More than 38,000 university students from Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan were educated by the lecturers who were trained to teach the UNODC university modules.

A pilot impact assessment through pre- and post-tests on real-life ethical dilemmas was carried out to measure the change in students’ ethical decision-making after being taught the modules. The analysis of 886 students’ responses from two project countries showed that the number of students with a high ability to identify ethical solutions nearly doubled after taking the courses.

“Participating in the Global Integrity Education project has allowed us to understand the importance of building knowledge collaboratively, as well as adapting educational content, related to professional ethics, to the specific context of each country.”

Ana María Zorrilla Noriega, Coordinator of the Culture of Legality Project, Academic Department of Law, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México
B. Limited collaboration between business and academia on business integrity education

Academic teaching at the university level is often enhanced by experiential learning and methods. However, this is only sometimes the case for business integrity education. Academia can benefit from better collaboration with business practitioners who can provide additional case studies and enrich the teaching, for example, through guest lectures.

UNODC learnings

» Universities should build and improve their engagement with business practitioners and corporate organizations, including for the co-development of educational tools and resources for learning.

» Guest lectures by business practitioners and real case studies on ethical issues faced by/in the respective companies are particularly efficient approaches to learning and often help improve students’ learning.

» Business and academia can create support platforms for continuous collaboration on teaching tools, resources and practical activities that can help make an impact on students in the long term.

Key achievements

» Through enhanced business-academia collaboration, 125 guest lectures were delivered by business practitioners to students in various universities across the three implementing countries.

» More than 38,000 students from universities in Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan were taught the UNODC university integrity, ethics and anti-corruption modules, and they reported increased knowledge of ethical issues through the teaching methods.

» Peer-to-peer learning platforms were established in all three implementing countries to further business-academia engagements.

“... It was a learning experience to participate in the Global Integrity Education project of UNODC. It was an honour to be part of a prestigious cause to inculcate the concept and practices of integrity in students’ personal and professional lives. “

Haroon Ahmed Shabbir, Director, Human Resources Amentis Technologies Private Limited, Pakistan
C. Lack of private sector on-the-job integrity trainings linked to university programmes

The UNODC experience highlights a gap between the theoretical anti-corruption knowledge and integrity issues provided in university education and the practical application of these principles through trainings for private sector representatives. This disconnect stresses the need for a continuous process of business integrity education, from the initial formation to the later career stages.

UNODC learnings

» The methodology and content of UNODC localized university integrity, ethics and anti-corruption modules were used to develop on-the-job integrity trainings for companies. Young graduates who received integrity education join the companies as “ethics ambassadors” and are involved in developing the trainings, putting into practice what they had learned at their universities, and sharing this knowledge with employees of the companies.

» Creating a network of private sector ethics ambassadors who regularly exchange experiences, challenges and new ideas to promote business integrity, while enabling the students to keep connecting with companies and get practical experience in compliance departments to become ethics champions in their future workplaces.

» Organization of training programmes for ethics ambassadors by universities, where graduate students receive intense training on ethical leadership delivered by lecturers, corporate experts and executives. As a result of the training, students are placed in private sector organizations to continue building their integrity skills and link university education and practice.

» At the same time, companies benefit from innovative training materials that can be rolled out to their employees. This initiative fosters a culture of integrity, improves anti-corruption knowledge and capacities within their organization and extends to their suppliers and business partners.

“ As a lawyer, it was definitely not the first time interacting with matters of ethics and integrity. These are crucial elements that have been taught times without number throughout my legal studies. The modules under the Global Integrity Education project have, however, buttressed my understanding and had a profound impact on me as an individual.”

Joku Justice, Ethics Ambassador, Kenya
Key achievements

» 2 on-the-job integrity training modules were developed based on selected integrity, ethics and anti-corruption university modules.

» The training modules also became a reference material for business partners in all implementing countries.

» 49 graduates who were taught the modules in Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan became ethics ambassadors in their workplaces and supported the development of on-the-job anti-corruption training programmes for businesses.

» 25 on-the-job integrity sessions on “Leading with Integrity” and “Corruption Risk Assessment and Compliance” were delivered, reaching 672 private sector representatives in Mexico and Pakistan.

» Networks of private sector ethics ambassadors were established in all three implementing countries to foster peer-to-peer learning and provide additional support to young graduates in dealing with ethical challenges in the private sector organization to which they were assigned.

“This project has equipped me with the skills and tools necessary to identify and prevent corruption risks and to promote a culture of transparency and accountability. I have gained a deeper understanding of the negative impact of corruption on society, the economy and governance as a whole. The knowledge I’ve gained through the UNODC modules has also helped me to improve my relationships, make myself accountable for my actions, identify areas of improvement, and reflect on my behaviour. In my role as Ethics Ambassador, I have been trying to promote and advocate for an ethical culture within the organization – encouraging awareness of ethical behaviour and liaising between the employees and the management.”

Mahnoor Ahmad, Ethics Ambassador, Pakistan
D. Lack of academia-private sector interactions, locally and globally, aimed at promoting business integrity

Promoting private sector integrity needs a more global audience to help reiterate its importance and to truly level the playing field. Providing a platform for shared learning and experience exchange can therefore greatly benefit stakeholders and serve as a source of inspiration for universities and businesses that seek to shape future business leaders with integrity.

UNODC learnings

» Creation of local and global support groups for shared learning in all three implementing countries.
» Regular engagements through support groups to generate ideas and improve dialogue on integrity education between academia and private sector stakeholders.

Key achievements

» Strengthened dialogue between the private sector and academia on business integrity through joint working groups, business guest lectures and work experiences for students in compliance departments of companies.
» Annual support group meetings and forums were also held at the global level to share experience and knowledge and to strengthen dialogue between business and academia.
» Fostered collaboration between the private sector and academia with the Coding4Integrity hackathon in Mexico, which allowed students to further put their ethical knowledge into practice and build technological solutions to integrity challenges in the health-care sector.

"For the private sector it is very important to get involved with society to find solutions to its most pressing problems, especially with students and teachers, as we mutually enrich each other with new perspectives on how to work with integrity in the professional environment."

Sonia del Carmen Nophal Salinas, Compliance Head, Grupo Bayer de México
General recommendations and conclusions

The following are recommendations for implementing business integrity education projects based on the results and experience from the UNODC Global Integrity Education project. Some recommendations are drawn from the International Good Practices Forum, held in Mexico in February 2023. The forum brought together academia, business practitioners and youth participating in the project from all three implementing countries to share knowledge and experiences.

1. **Building strategic partnerships and networks is key**

Business integrity education provides the opportunity to engage with and support collective action of businesses, academia and students to foster anti-corruption and integrity. Such engagement allows for synergies that can lead to long-lasting impact and investment in business integrity, enabling companies to recruit ethically minded students who will one day become business leaders.

2. **Incorporate anti-corruption courses in university curricula**

Integrity, ethics and anti-corruption modules provide a great resource for future business practitioners regardless of their professional field of interest. In this regard, the adoption of localized modules in university curricula and the participation of business practitioners in the teaching can become a solid foundation for educating future generations of students who will become employees and/or leaders in the business world.

3. **Create internship opportunities and on-the-job training programmes to complement business integrity education initiatives**

This approach gives students the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained during their studies. By dealing with real-life challenges, students or young graduates are challenged to apply ethical solutions to complex problems they might face. Thus, ethical skills and mindsets are further enhanced.
4. Create innovative programmes to enrich the teaching and draw on the creativity of the students to develop tech-based solutions to integrity challenges

An emerging approach to business integrity education is empowering students to apply their skills and knowledge in anti-corruption to develop technological solutions that can promote ethics, integrity and transparency in the private sector. This approach allows students from various fields of study to work together in creating innovative solutions to ethical, integrity and anti-corruption challenges, supported by company mentors. It also gives them practical technology and data science skills that are much sought after in today’s job market and creates a platform for an exchange with the private sector on anti-corruption and integrity. In line with this approach, in 2023, UNODC organized a Coding4Integrity youth anti-corruption hackathon in Mexico.2

5. Measuring impact through a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework

Measuring the impact of a business integrity education project can have many facets. For instance, the use of well-designed survey questionnaires can prove beneficial in providing a snapshot of participants’ immediate experience of the programme or in collating primary data. Monitoring and evaluation require mixed-method instruments to measure ethical attitudes and behaviours. It is important to work with the project stakeholders (academia and private sector partners) in drawing up relevant indicators for the local contexts. These will also need to be piloted and reviewed before being rolled out for use.

6. Business integrity education is for all

All businesses require some rules and regulations to be effective. In this regard, business integrity education should not be limited to only students or graduates of business or law. Components of business integrity education can be integrated into other courses, including science, engineering, arts and social science. Additionally, these components can be adopted or incorporated into organizational training and development plans and/or activities. Business integrity education not only enhances students’ or employees’ ethical awareness and commitment but also equips them with skills to increase their work efficiency. It complements innovative thinking with strong values, an ethical compass, a code of integrity and a common purpose that benefits society at large.

Further resources

- UNODC’s Business Integrity Portal

![UNODC Business Integrity Portal](image1)

- UNODC’s Global Integrity Education Project

![UNODC Business Integrity Portal](image2)

- UNODC’s GRACE initiative

![UNODC’s GRACE initiative](image3)