



B Academy

Activity Report 2021

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Preface

B Academy Connects Students With Real-World Lessons On Stakeholder Capitalism

Teachers, professors and leaders are finding an enthusiastic audience for the movement to reshape the global economy into one built on stakeholder capitalism. Students, who are among the generation most likely to be affected by changes to the economy as the workers, consumers, and community members of the future, are seizing new opportunities to build their knowledge and experience by learning about and working with Certified B Corporations through an expanding network known as B Academy.

Since 2014, B Lab Switzerland has been building the B Academy network of educators, researchers, students and practitioners. B Academy connects the growing community of B Corps pursuing a more inclusive and regenerative economy with students looking to work for, learn from, or do business with purpose-minded companies. With our privileged position at the intersection of the business and academic worlds, we have the unique capacity to foster at-scale collaborations, offering students exposure to high-quality business cases and enterprises an always-welcomed external view on their business model(s).

We are proud to contribute to the education of the leaders of tomorrow. Our transverse approach to equip the next generations with best-in-class tools to understand the Grand Sustainability Challenges of the 21st century has proved to be effective. This is no surprise: the silo approach of the last 50 years can't solve complex issues; only true, transverse collaboration can.

This Report is a testimony to the trust from our academic partners - small and large - since all these years, and a milestone in our journey to make sustainability the new normal in academic teachings. We couldn't be more excited for the decades to come and to use our B Academy programs as building blocks to

pave the way towards a fairer and more resilient future. As a concrete next step, we're announcing the creation of the B Academics Circle Switzerland, a forum to share academic best practices, promote research in the use of business as a force for good, and foster experiential learning.



Jonathan Normand

Founder & Executive director, B Lab Switzerland
Academic Fellow School of Economy and
Management, University of Geneva

Introduction

”As our society faces unprecedented challenges, we must shift from our traditional way of thinking. Building a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy will only be achieved through a combination of transformative education, mission-oriented innovation and applied research. This systemic model is at the core of the Enterprise for Society Center (E4S). **“**

- Jean-Pierre Danthine, Managing Director,
Enterprise for Society Center (E4S)

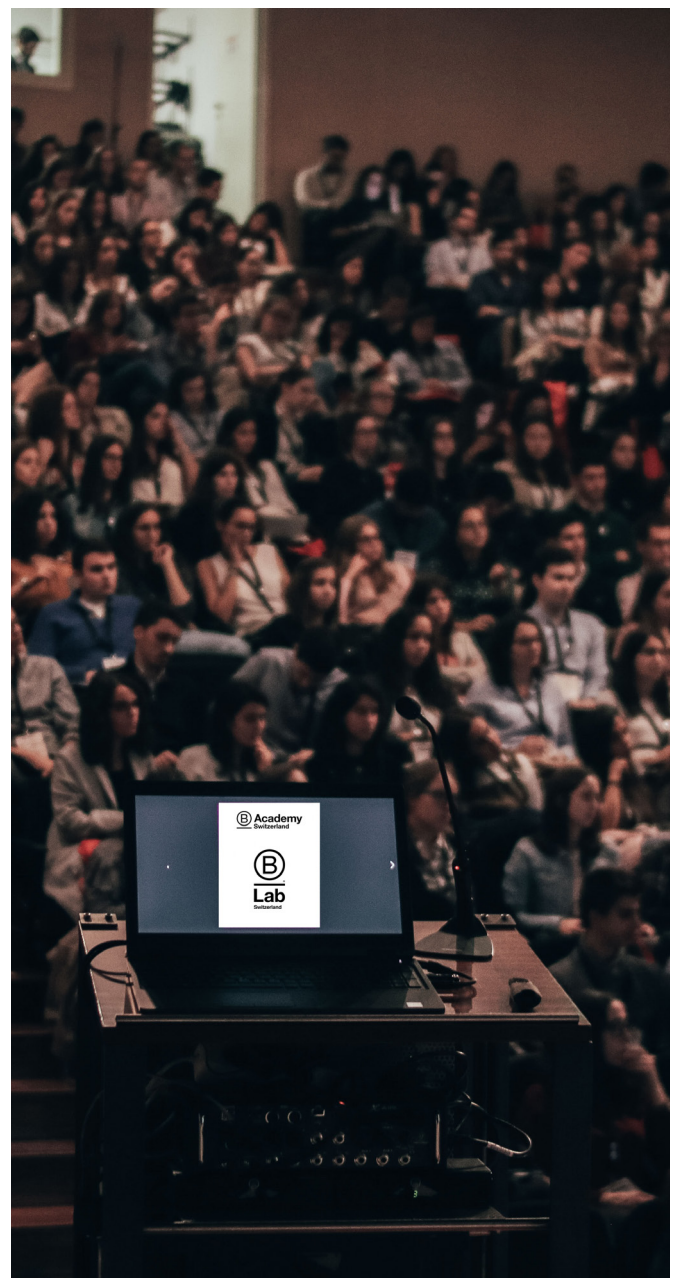
The B Academy programs reflect the rise in awareness on climate change in the academic world. Since their launch seven years ago, the interest in sustainability classes has skyrocketed to an all-time high in 2021. Increasingly, more institutions, professors and students move to take action to address society's pressing social and environmental challenges.

B Academy offers different programs to teach strategic ESG management, impact measurement, and inclusive economic pathways in universities and higher education institutes. Our programs are dual, as they educate on the best sustainability practices and provide hands-on experiences to students by connecting the academic world with the business world.

Our offering of programs is constantly growing and evolving to address the plurality of demands from academic institutions. As of today, it ranges from a simple class intervention - giving students a global vision of sustainable development challenges in the private sector - to full-fledged 12-weeks classes with business consulting opportunities. In the latter, we activate our community of B Corps so that students can deep dive both in strategic management and in concrete operationalisation. Applying student's theoretical learnings to the complex sustainability challenges of companies make for passionate brainstorming sessions and positively surprising solutions.

Throughout its seven years of activity, B Academy partnered with prestigious institutions such as UNIGE, HEG-GE and HES-SO, EPFL, UNIL and HSG.

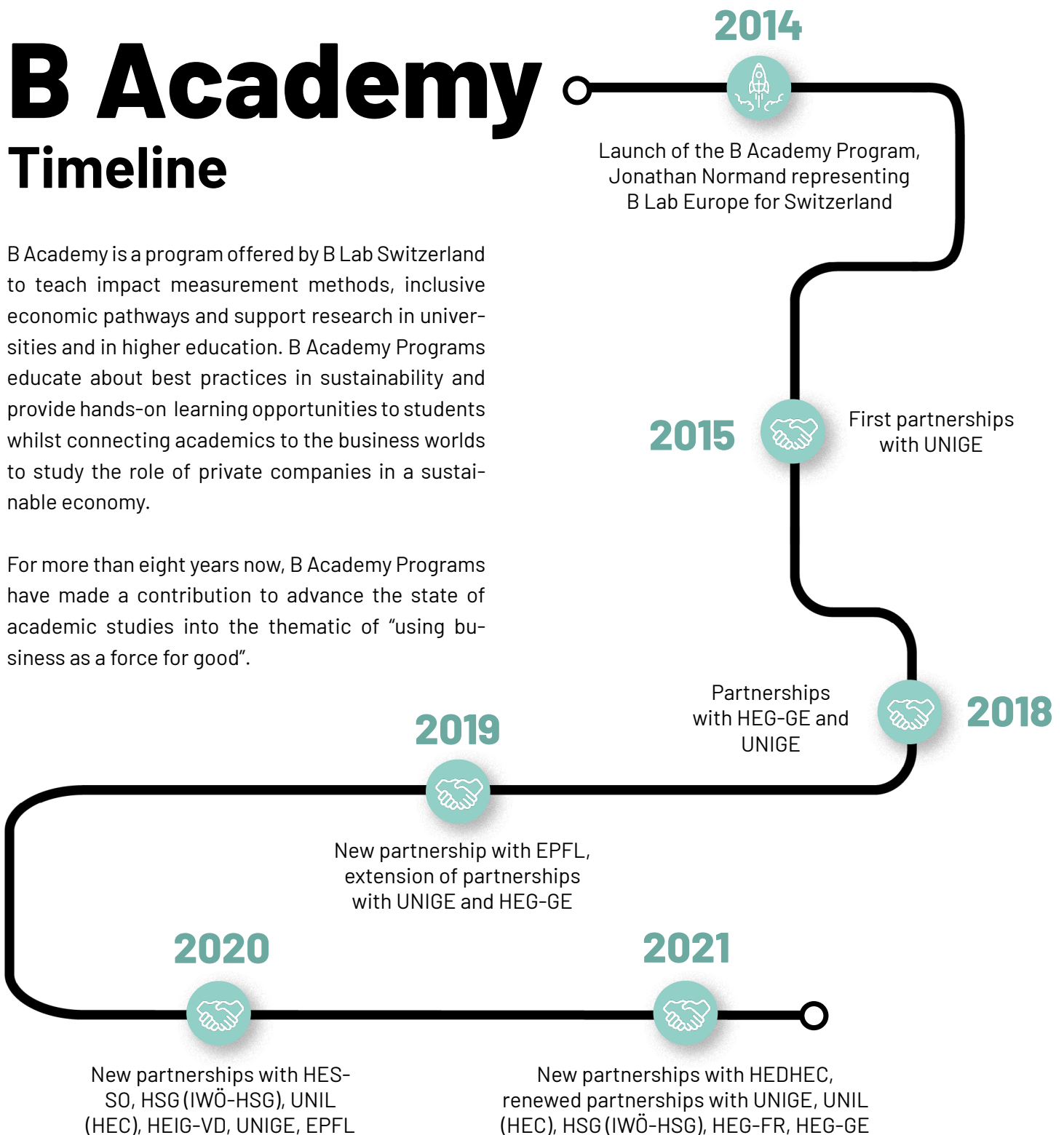
We brought more than 20 companies onboard - Magic Tomato, Farmy, ecoRobotix and Luigia Restaurants, to name a few - and touched over 3'000 students throughout Switzerland. To keep the momentum growing, we're now announcing the launch of the B Academics Circle Switzerland, and a new program "Train the Trainer - B Academy" is coming soon. And alongside new collaborations, we're looking forward to the years ahead of us to keep having an impact on the academic world.



B Academy Timeline

B Academy is a program offered by B Lab Switzerland to teach impact measurement methods, inclusive economic pathways and support research in universities and in higher education. B Academy Programs educate about best practices in sustainability and provide hands-on learning opportunities to students whilst connecting academics to the business worlds to study the role of private companies in a sustainable economy.

For more than eight years now, B Academy Programs have made a contribution to advance the state of academic studies into the thematic of "using business as a force for good".



NUMBER OF CLASS + 32 INTERVENTIONS



**Number of Students
that participated in
B Academy programs**

+2500

**UNIVERSITIES
WITH WHOM B LAB
PARTNERED WITH**

9

26

**TOTAL NUMBER
OF PROJECTS
B LAB IS OR HAS
PARTICIPATED IN**

YEARS OF ACTIVITY



**NUMBER
OF HOURS
≈ 2'800**

**+60 COMPANIES
PARTICIPATED**





B Academy Programs

Academic institutions play a crucial role in shaping the leaders of tomorrow and preparing the students for the realities they will face once they graduate and enter the professional world. That is why, with B Academy, B Lab Switzerland has developed a series of programs that aims to broaden students' knowledge on sustainability issues, provide tools and case studies to solve business challenges, and expand their professional behavior and skills. B Academy Switzerland has developed four main programs to educate future change makers on the 21st century's Grand Sustainability Challenges:

1. **Class Intervention**
2. **Mock-Consulting**
3. **Full-Fledged Business Consulting (B Impact Assessment)**
4. **Full-Fledged Business Consulting (SDG Action Manager Tool)**

1. Class Intervention

	For whom?	Bachelor, Master, MBA, Continuing Education
	Duration	1h00 - 1h30

This course has as a goal to give students a global vision of sustainable development challenges in the private sector. It provides an introduction to the key concepts of sustainability. These are the company's social and environmental impact and good governance practices. The tools to measure and manage a company's extra-financial impacts are also addressed. Interaction with the audience is placed

at the center of the intervention to stimulate critical thinking and trigger interest in the topic.

”

*It was **a premiere** to work side-by-side with a concrete company, which made our research more productive and added extra motivation to the group. Since the beginning, we acknowledged that our project has **an actual impact** on the company's strategy. So, being sustainability consultants for the first time has been a true challenge for us and it has pushed us **one step further towards excellence**.*


”


Participating Student

Responsible Management Class; University of Geneva's GSEM (Geneve School of Economics & Management)




2. Mock-Consulting

 **For whom?** Bachelor students

 **Duration** 3 - 6 weeks
(course module)

The Mock-Consulting program introduces business students to the strategic management of sustainability challenges with a hands-on approach. Students are made to work in groups on a mock company with the objectives to first identify social, environmental or governance impact improvements, and then build a case for their implementation. Students take this opportunity to deepen their understanding of the innate complexity of balancing purpose and profit, and to think innovatively on solutions to tackle implementation barriers they identified. The B Impact Assessment (BIA) serves as a reference framework for impact management.

3. Full-Fledged Business Consulting

 **For whom?** Master and MBA students

 **Duration** 3 - 12 weeks
(semester)

The Business Consulting (BIA) program is an enhanced version of the Mock-Consulting teaching. It offers a deeper dive into the strategic management of key sustainability challenges of private companies.

Students then have the opportunity to apply their learnings by working with real companies on addressing these challenges. B Lab Switzerland activates its ecosystem of private enterprises willing to share their extra- financial performances, BIA score and advancements in sustainability, to offer students concrete case studies.

”

For our Master's course at HEC Lausanne, we suggest that students use B Lab's «B Impact Assessment» (BIA) tool with their client to structure the diagnosis phase and strategic recommendations in terms of CSR. This analysis framework seems to us to be the most relevant on the market today. The participation of B Lab Switzerland in our program allows us to embody the movement with the participants and to bring a welcome support when sharp questions arise.

Christophe Fischer & Steve Aeschlimann
Lecturers at HEC Lausanne

”

”

We have received the formal and informal evaluations from our students and the majority of our students really appreciated the project a lot and enjoyed working with a company on a 'real' project to make a difference. It goes without saying that I enjoyed it too and think that this is one of the most meaningful student projects that I have done so far.


Judith Schrempf-Stirling
Associate Professor of Responsible Management
Geneva School of Economics and Management (GSEM)

”

Taking into account the companies' specificities, each group produces an Impact Improvement Report, which presents a set of recommendations to either address impact gaps, or improve existing operational and business model impacts.

This provides a hands-on experience to students to understand how to build recommendations, and the challenges of the path from idealization to concretization.

4. Full-Fledged Business Consulting (SDG Action Manager Tool)

 **For whom?** Master and MBA students

 **Duration** 3 - 12 weeks (semester)

The Business Consulting (SDG) program is an iteration of the Business Consulting (BIA) course. It provides students with critical insights on the structuring benefits of the Sustainable Development Goals for the private sector, the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, and the use of the SDG Action Manager tool. Students are connected with actual companies to map out their contributions to the SDGs and develop recommendations to further these contributions. Students present their findings during a final oral presentation at the end of the class and submit the report to the company.



”

Our partnership with B Academy allowed our students to work with a high profile company for an entire semester, and to develop a deep understanding of the private sector's sustainability challenges. The hands-on approach of the B Lab Team and their sustainability frameworks for impact management put the students in a "solution-oriented" mindset, and helped strengthen their professional skills. We're happy to announce the second edition of our collaboration in Fall 2021!

”

Prof. Dr. Judith L. Walls

Chair of Sustainability Management, Professor & Director
Institute for Economy and the Environment (IWÖ)

The implementation of the Consulting programs contribute to raise awareness on the 21st Century's Grand Sustainability Challenges in three major ways:

01.

It provides students with a substantial and instructive managerial experience with privileged access to the obstacles companies face in designing and implementing their sustainability strategies.

02.

Companies involved in the program decisively benefit from the students' outside perspective and their diverse backgrounds and expertise. The implementation of some to all of the students' recommendations is a testimony to the added-value of their Reports and the Programs.

03.

At a global scale, the business community strengthens and widens its positive environmental, social and governance impact, bringing about real systems change. The academic community equips and stimulates the leaders of tomorrow.

Partnerships

Over the past years, B Lab has been collaborating with several Universities across Switzerland to facilitate courses, share knowledge and skills required to build a resilient, inclusive and durable economy. These partnerships give the leaders of tomorrow the keys to understanding the challenges of the 21st century and provide them a new set of skills to transform these challenges into opportunities.

Haute Ecole de Gestion de Genève (HEG)



CAS
Intervention



Mock -
Consulting



Class
intervention



Through the Mock-consulting program, students from HEG Geneva have the opportunity to conduct in-depth qualitative research with companies who have responded to the Swiss Sustainability Benchmark, a sustainability performance measurement tool recently launched by B Lab Switzerland. This data will complement the answers already provided on the B Impact Assessment by the companies, adding a

qualitative dimension to the insights that will be shared in a report to be published by B Lab at the end of 2021.

Andrea Baranzini, Director of HEG Geneva states "Academic institutions like HEG Genève play a key role in leading the change by training students to be responsible actors. This includes equipping students with the approaches and tools to make choices that steer our firms and organizations towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but also inspiring them to take action and demonstrate leadership".

University of Geneva (UNIGE)



Class
intervention



Company Consulting at
Geneva School of Economics
and Management (GSEM)



B Lab Switzerland and the Faculty of Economics and Management of the University of Geneva (GSEM) have joined forces to offer a unique academic experience

as part of the «Responsible Management» with Professor Judith Schrempf-Stirling during the Fall 2019 semester. For an entire semester, the first year Master in Management students were offered the opportunity to work as “junior consultants” on real case studies with companies in the Geneva region, active in Switzerland and internationally. This project had the dual objective of training future changemakers and accompanying companies in their journey towards sustainability by identifying their potential for improvement.

”

The collaboration with the students in this project was very interesting for us. Their questions, cleverly framed, helped us to think differently about our practices, even before receiving the final Report. We appreciated having a fresh, outside perspective on ecoRobotix's practices. We're looking forward to continuing our journey towards sustainability by incorporating their valuable suggestions.

”

Florence Schneider
Sustainability Manager at ecoRobotix

University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland - HES - SO



Company
Consulting

During this partnership focused on Integrative Management Experience, which is part of the Master in Business Administration, students are brought together in groups and put in contact with private companies. Based on the B Impact Assessment tool, contacts with companies, and contextual research, the students work on six recommendations to improve the impact of the company on its stakeholders.

This partnership allows students to gain concrete learning experience, and, at the same time, companies benefit from a fresh perspective and a relevant analysis of the challenges they face.

”

This group project in collaboration with B Lab not only allowed us to gain a foothold in the corporate world but also to see how Swiss companies position themselves in terms of responsibility and reflect on what more they can do. This project gave us a sense of satisfaction and responsibility.

”

Participating Student
Participating Student in the Academic Program



”

The enthusiasm with which our students carry out this course module reinforces our conviction that change towards a responsible economy will accelerate with this generation who seek impact. Higher education institutes must provide students the tools to develop their sustainability and responsibility skills all along their academic path. By providing specialized competencies to their desire for a more responsible society, we ensure the professional world successors that are ready to anticipate these challenges.

We find that companies enjoy the out of the box creative ideas that our students bring. Nevertheless, working with real companies which operate in a given sector with a number of constraints puts students in direct contact with the paradoxes that face today's leaders. This type of exercise leave very little room for utopia as strategic recommendations must be realizable.

”

Camille Magron

Head of the Masters of Science HES-SO in Business Administration (MSc BA)

University of St. Gallen (HSG) - ACA-HSG (Institute for Accounting, Control and Auditing)



Company Consulting



Sustainability Workshop for Student Associations

As part of their Capstone project, students from St. Gallen University research motivations and barriers for SMEs engaging in sustainability, by interviewing participants of B Lab's Swiss Triple Impact program.

Simon Pfister, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in Managerial Finance, University of St. Gallen shares: «From insight to impact» - following the University of St. Gallen motto, I repeatedly challenge students to learn hard, but at the same time apply this knowledge to real situations and always keep social and environmental aspects of suggestions and decisions at the top of their argumentation. Through the collaboration with B-Lab this transfer to impact becomes vivid, practical and relevant in ways it would not be possible otherwise. While working with various different companies on their actual questions, the students are challenged in unprecedented ways and they are motivated to think about making an impact in their lives while putting all their knowledge and background to work.

“A theoretically nourishing and concretely stimulating sharing.”

- Pharmacie Sen'su

“ The work provided by the students is giving us new perspectives for improvements in the sustainability field. We hope to quickly implement their recommendations. Bravo to them! ”

- Magic Tomato

B Academy and the academic ecosystem

Additionally to its numerous activities with universities and higher education institutes, B Academy also plays a role in the broader academic community as an ecosystem activator. Concretely, B Lab Switzerland aims to spread both knowledge and best practices to the leading generations of tomorrow; teaching them how to lead without solely financial goals in mind.

Leading the way in this field, we are for instance proud to have collaborated with student association OIKOS many times in recent years. OIKOS is the leading university students' association in the fields of economics and management, present in numerous Swiss universities. A partnership consisted in co-hosting a successful Sustainability Workshop at the University of St.Gallen, together with other pioneer associations like START, Student Impact, and the Social Business Club.

Another collaboration took place in the framework of the OIKOS & START - an entrepreneurship students' association - Start-Ups Challenge. It provided students with foundational knowledge in how to embed sustainability within the business model of their start-up from inception. It also allowed for a deep immersion in impact management through tools like B Lab Switzerland's impact analysis matrix (Impact Business Model Spectrum Chart) and the B Impact Assessment.

”

As leaders of tomorrow, we need to become familiar with the challenges we will face. B Lab has played a major mentoring role in guiding our actions in the right direction and allowing students to become aware of the problems to be addressed. B Lab is committed to providing quality education, encouraging entrepreneurship and diversity of thought to get us to develop innovative ideas to be actors of change. We can only thank them for their guidance!

Hugo Fenoli-Rebellato
Member of Networking Oikos

”

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of innovation, and we are thrilled that through our B Academy expertise we could offer Sustainability Introduction Workshops for numerous start-up contests, such as the Prix Strategis 2021 of HEC Espace Entreprise, for which Jonathan Normand is a member of the jury.



Conclusion

B Academy's activities grew steadily since the initial steps in 2014. And just as B Lab's Theory of Change to use business as a force for good gains more traction every day, so does students' expectations to receive climate change education. It will take massive efforts from the academic stakeholders to meet these expectations: the 21st century Grand Sustainability Challenges are complex by nature, and so is the system thinking approach to solve them.

In the future, B Academy will keep acting as a catalyst to integrate sustainability at the heart of next generation's management practices. But this is not enough. We believe that sustainability in studies should not be an individual course or a class intervention, but has to be intrinsic to all studies. Sustainable development, from impact measurement to inclusive economic pathways, must be at the core of all professions and all sectors, as leading scientific report underline. To reach this, it is essential to bring impact management tools and sustainable economic models at scale. B Lab Switzerland's contribution to this vision rests on three axis.

First, to bring our tool, experiential learning opportunities and knowledge to the German-Speaking regions of Switzerland. We are advancing in this direction with our first partnership with HSG St. Gallen, and several more in the making.

Second, to collaborate with professors and researchers to design and roll-out a full-fledged class on sustainability. Complementing our offering, the content would include deep dives on the private sec-

tor's sustainability challenges, a portfolio of case studies to showcase actionable solutions, and testimonies from companies on their strategies to navigate complexity.

Third, to build throughout Europe a community of experts and educators to share best practices and participate in advancing the state of academic study into a business as a force for good. The B Academics Circle Switzerland and Train the Trainer are integral building blocks of this pan-european outreach to engage professors, students and the private sector.

Today more than ever, let's get our head down to work. Collectively, we can build a fairer, more resilient and sustainable world. And it all starts with education. Are you onboard?



Sebastien Chahidi

B Academy Programs Manager



Kirsi Beaumond

Academic Programs Coordinator

Boilerplates

What is B Lab Switzerland ?



[B Lab Switzerland](#) is the Swiss branch of the global non-profit B Lab. At B Lab Switzerland, we help and support the communities of people and businesses to improve their social and environmental impacts. We run global activities such as the B Corporation certification process, recognizing credible businesses that meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance. We provide the necessary tools for businesses to measure and improve their impact (ESG rating) such as the B Impact Assessment. Finally, we run regional engagement programs to onboard new businesses in our movement.

B Impact Assessment

The [B Impact Assessment \(BIA\)](#) is a free, online and confidential platform designed to help measure and manage your company's positive impact on your workers, community, customers and environment. The BIA assesses the impact of both your company's day-to-day operations and your business model—both what you do and how you do it. Your responses to the B Impact Assessment determine your total numeric score. B Corp Certification requires a minimum verified total score of 80 across all impact areas.

What is B Lab Global ?

[B Lab](#) is transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet. A leader in economic systems change, our global network creates standards, policies, and tools for business, and we certify companies—known as B Corps—who are leading the way. To date, our community includes over **4'000** B Corps in 70 countries and 150 industries, and over 100,000 companies manage their impact with the B Impact Assessment and the SDG Action Manager.

Swiss Triple Impact



The [Swiss Triple Impact](#) is a program initiated by B Lab Switzerland to accelerate the contribution of Swiss businesses towards a resilient and sustainable economy. Using the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework, the Swiss Triple Impact enables companies to measure their social and environmental impact, and identify opportunities for improvement.

In 3 steps, the Swiss Triple Impact program will guide the participants towards focusing on the most important SDGs for their business, having a solid action plan in place, and sharing their commitment by joining a Directory of Swiss companies making an impact.

SDG Action Manager



The [SDG Action Manager](#) is a web-based impact management solution to enable businesses to take action on the Sustainable Development Goals through dynamic self-assessment, benchmarking, and improvement. The SDG Action Manager is structured as a series of modules, beginning with a "Baseline Module" that provides a starting point for users and expanding to modules for each Sustainable Development Goal from Goal 1 through to Goal 16. Each module features a series of questions designed to offer concrete actions for businesses to improve their impact, to track their progress and to help them in their implementation.

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