



Developing Global Citizen Leaders

A Program Piloted by the Center for Creative Leadership and Design Impact for Business School Students in India



Center for
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Leadership

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Introduction

CCL and Design Impact collaborated with WeSchool and iFEEL to develop the Global Citizen Leaders program. The program was designed to develop leadership, innovation and social engagement in the next generation of business leaders in India. Some 260 business school students participated in the program, which challenged them to apply their learning via dozens of social innovation projects spanning rural entrepreneurship, clean water, sanitation, education, agribusiness, healthcare, financial inclusion, and other domains.

The Challenge

Young people around the world are faced with one of the worst job markets in decades. With global youth unemployment rates close to 13 percent¹, this problem is exacerbated in developing regions where as many as two-thirds of young workers are under-utilized. Given the competition for jobs, students need every advantage they can get when it comes not only to having the right education, but also the skills organizations seek the most.

In just about every corner of the globe, evidence suggests that **students are perceived as ill-prepared** for the demands of the workplace. There is a significant gap between the skills that are deemed most important for success on the job and the readiness of those entering the workforce.

In the United States, the Conference Board² reports that employers rate skills such as communication, professionalism, teamwork, and critical thinking among the most important for job success, followed closely by social responsibility, leadership, information technology and creativity/innovation. However, in this study, college students only received top ratings in one of these skills – information technology. Further, almost a quarter of college-educated workers are rated as deficient by employers in the area of leadership, while nearly 82 percent of employers rate the ability to lead as very important. Similarly, in *Expanding the Leadership Equation*³, a CCL study on the job skills needed for young people, employers named self-motivation, communication, learning agility, self-awareness, and adaptability as the most

essential; furthermore, 90 percent indicated that this development needed to begin before the age of 18.

In India, there is a similar skills gap. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article, “India Graduates Millions, but Too Few are Fit to Hire,”⁴ reports that business executives believe schools in India focus on rote learning more than critical thinking skills. Similarly, in a study conducted in 2010 of 303 employers, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry⁵ found that a majority of graduates lacked the soft skills necessary to be employed. The situation in India is particularly concerning considering people under the age of 25 comprise half of the nation’s population.

The employment issue is just one of many challenges that exist globally. Youth are needed, now and in the future, to work effectively, lead businesses, and come together to solve some of the world’s toughest problems. Many of the skills cited by employers are similar to the skills needed to lead, or even contribute to, this kind of change. In addition to accelerating leadership skills, new graduates also need a universal perspective regarding the difficulties faced by others and a sense of responsibility to produce results that matter.

So what can an educational institution do to help equip students with both the necessary skills for employment and the growth mind-set needed to be leaders of change?

The Solution

From September 2012 to March 2013, through the *Leadership Beyond Boundaries* effort⁶, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL[®]) and Design Impact (DI) piloted the Global Citizen Leaders Program (GCL) at the Welingkar Institute of Management Development (WeSchool) in Mumbai, India, and at the Institute for Future Education Entrepreneurship and Leadership (iFEEL) in Lonavala, India. The Center for Creative Leadership, Design Impact, and the two institutions worked together to co-design and deliver a seven-month leadership and innovation program to 260 business school students. The goals of the program were to build student competency in interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and innovation and give them the opportunity to apply the learning to real-life social challenges. A program evaluation was conducted by CCL's Evaluation Center to measure the impact of the program⁷.

The design of the program included:

1

Three Face-to-Face Classroom Sessions

Three-day classroom sessions were highly interactive and experiential. Students learned skills such as observation, story-boarding, and insight generation. They also explored their own social identities, reflected on their life journeys, developed a personal leadership brand, and practiced presentation skills.

2

Project-based learning

On average, students worked in teams of eight over the course of the program to identify an issue in the community, learn about it from the perspective of stakeholders, and generate a prototype to address the issue. Through this experience they not only practiced their innovation skills but also gained experience with teamwork, giving feedback, and leading.

3

Mentoring from faculty

Students were assigned faculty mentors who helped them both on project-related progress as well as in their personal development as leaders.

While the classroom content was deemed very enjoyable and valuable by most students, the team-based learning provided practical hands-on experience. Teams took on projects ranging from access to healthcare to traffic management to sanitation. Through required fieldwork and interaction with stakeholders, students developed a world view that helped them focus on others and ultimately develop prototypes to help address community problems. All the while, students had to practice leading and team-building with diverse per-

sonalities, areas of expertise, and personal backgrounds.

A train-the-trainer approach was used to scale the program in which faculty members from each of the two campuses were trained by CCL and DI to serve as facilitators and mentors. This approach allowed the program to be delivered to 260 students across two campuses while simultaneously building faculty capacity at the two institutions.

Global Citizen Leadership Program for WeSchool

Innovative Action in an Interdependent World



The Impact

The GCL program uses a Leadership Beyond Boundaries framework that correlates greater social impact with increased personal development. At the foundation, the focus is on helping individuals build self-clarity and motivation. A second level is building interpersonal skills to work effectively with others. A third layer is about preparing young people to bring about positive change in their organizations and community using the levers of innovation and leadership.



“(GCL) has helped me improve my confidence, become aware of societal problems and challenges and helped us realize the need to contribute as an individual for the betterment of this society and to make it a better place to live in.”

- Student response



“You wouldn’t know what leadership is without action and you couldn’t take action without leadership.”

- Student response

The Impact on Students

Students were positively impacted in multiple ways by the GCL program. For instance:

- Students reported gaining skills associated with both leadership and innovation components. For example, increased self-awareness and improved observation skills were among the top two areas of growth.
- Other top areas of development included experimentation, generating new ideas, insightful-ness, connection with others, and empathy.
- Students formed strong associations between leadership and innovation. Both rely on understanding others better, the courage to take risks, and persistence in the face of adversity.
- Students described the powerful impact of participating in field work with people from diverse backgrounds. They spoke about seeing people differently, being more open to getting to know others, and moving from a cognitive understanding of a social issue to a genuine emotional connection to it.
- Students reported changing the way they approach and tackle problems, becoming more effective working in teams and more motivated to improve and address societal issues.



“The ability to take initiative and also to try and boost the morale of the group members whenever the team is feeling low and are laid back in their approach.”

- Student response



“The project gave me a chance to be a part of the group where at times, I played leader and at times, a follower or just a teammate.

- Student response



“One day I hope to be working on developing my own businesses.
GCL has helped us to develop that spark.”

- Student response

Summary of Major Areas of Improvement for Students, as a Result of GCL

LEADING SELF

86%* improved ability to learn from experience

67% have greater clarity about personal path

79% have more confidence in themselves as leaders

COLLABORATION

87% improved in communicating about self and ideas

84% have greater effectiveness in teams

88% improved ability to build relationships

INNOVATION

87% improved ability to apply design thinking principles

89% improved ability to generate new ideas and vision

SOCIAL ACTION

80% improved ability to address social challenges

79% increased motivation to improve societal challenges

92% increased awareness of social issues

* This represents the % of students indicating improvement or significant improvement as a result of GCL.

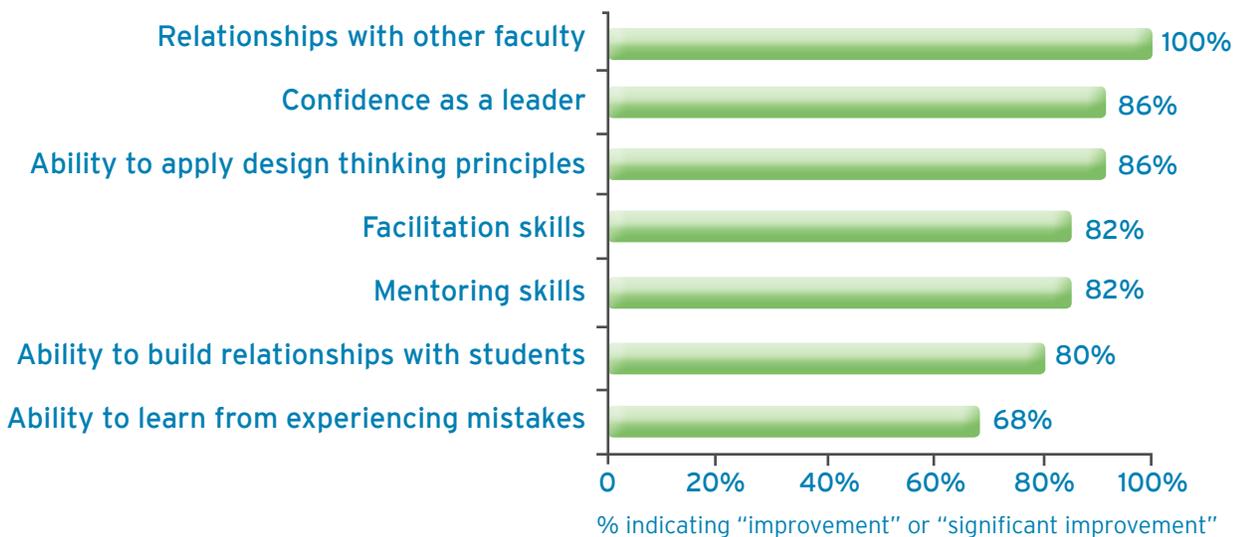
The Impact on Faculty

While the impact on students was the primary focus of the program, faculty also experienced positive impact in several ways. Faculty described that they had not taught using experiential learning before, and this was a good opportunity to practice a new way of teaching. They described how they were used to just giving students information, such as the rote learning referenced in the *Wall Street Journal* article, rather than facilitating dialogue. Others said that they learned to relate to students in a different way than they had before. Of the faculty survey respondents:

Eighty-six percent believed they increased confidence as leaders as a result of this program, and one hundred percent said they improved their relationships with other faculty as a result of GCL.

86%

Faculty Perceptions of Personal Impact



"Specifically the learning curve of a leader's journey has (been) helpful to understand that every leader has ups and downs, and (realizing this has) made me more strong from inside."

- Faculty response



Impact on the Institutions

There is also evidence of potential impact of the program at the institutional level. While the focus of the evaluation was not to measure this level of impact, some of the data suggest actual and potential impact for both We-School and iFEEL.

- Raising the bar on program standards in general
- Providing the institutions a common language about leadership and innovation
- Institutional distinctiveness
- Strengthening the relationship with the community



One of the most compelling examples of the impact the program is having on the relationship between the institutions and their communities comes from observing the program in its last week. The students had worked diligently on their projects in the community, alongside men and women (their “stakeholders”) from the neighboring village. On the day the students made final presentations to a panel of corporate leaders, the community stakeholders were invited to listen. At the end of the presentations, they were given gifts of appreciation for the partnership with the students and they were invited to make speeches. One group of village women even performed a song of appreciation to the school and the students who had worked with them on an income-generation initiative by producing chili pickles. In a context where social hierarchy creates separation, this event, which brought together villagers, corporate executives, business professors and students, spanned many boundaries.



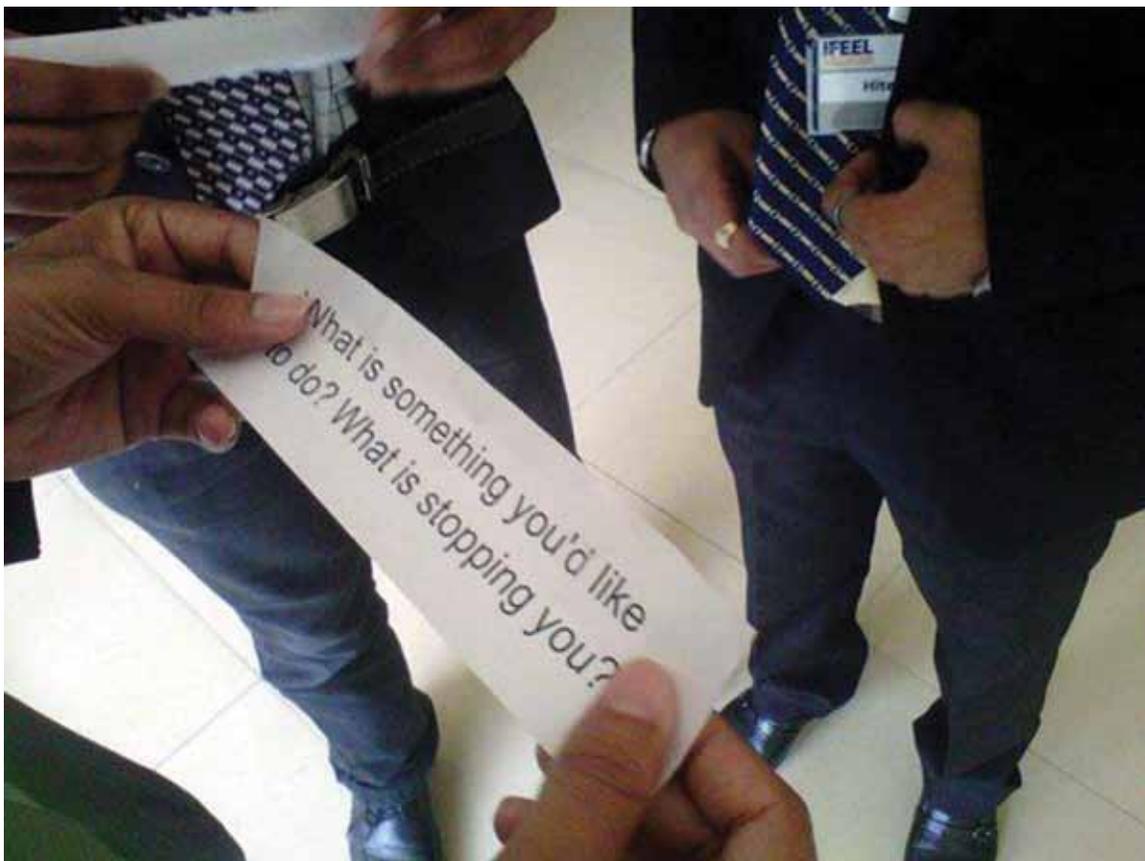
Impact on the Community

It was evident that some of the team projects also had a direct positive impact on the communities within this short time frame. Examples include:

- One group set up two health clinics in a rural area where care was provided to approximately 700 people, doubling the number of people who usually attend such clinics.
- One group provided new toilets for a school in rural Karla that formerly had one unsanitary toilet for more than 400 students to share.
- One team served as mentors to girls in a local school, helping them with school work and serving as role models.
- One team launched a Web site that can be accessed by rural entrepreneurs interested in getting knowledge and resources to help them in their business ventures.

To hear participants in the program speak about the experience, see:

<http://vimeo.com/68532386>.



Impact in the Workplace

As a result of the program and development in the areas students described above, more than 78 percent of student respondents report this program has increased their confidence of having a successful career.

A CEO who was a panelist in the program explained that with the growth of management education in India, many young people gain an MBA without work experience. He said, *“What they’ve learned here will go a long way in the corporate world.”* Another executive declared that this initiative is giving the GCL students an extra edge – unlike other students, he said *“They are actually getting to do things; others just read about it.”* Additionally, there are significant growth opportunities in rural markets that may give GCL students an

advantage in the job market. Several students described that in trying to secure summer placements, they were already talking about their experience in the GCL program to give themselves a competitive advantage.

At the time this impact story was produced, students are completing summer internships. Informal reports from faculty indicate that WeSchool students are demonstrating greater confidence and being rewarded with significant assignments, such as designing new service models and products. Future impact evaluation work can more systematically document some of the potential impact this program has on experiences in internships and work.

Conclusion

Young people today are facing enormous challenges, related both to their own preparedness and marketability for a fulfilling career as well as broader societal issues that they have the potential to impact. Technical competence is very important for these emerging workers, but it's not enough. To be effective in achieving sustained impact for themselves and the world, they will need to possess proven and cutting-edge skills associated with leadership and innovation.

WeSchool Director Uday Salunkhe states that this kind of development is needed more broadly in education:

"Democratizing leadership education is the call of the day ...The world needs leaders who are comfortable with ambiguity and are open to experimentation. Leadership is, therefore, for everyone. Addressing the world's most pressing problems requires leadership education to be imparted at all levels, not merely at the top of our most powerful corporate and academic institutions, but also at the ground level, in far-flung villages and poor urban slums."

The Global Citizen Leaders program highlighted here is by no means the only way to accomplish this lofty agenda, but it represents a path that benefits students, employers, educational institutions, and communities. Through programs like this one, CCL is working with educational institutions in multiple countries to rethink and reshape education and equip young people with essential tools and skills needed in our increasingly complex and changing world.

About the Partnering Organizations

Leadership Beyond Boundaries is an initiative by the Center for Creative Leadership to democratize leadership development and unlock the power of human potential. By extending leadership development to all, we're expanding the leadership equation. By helping individuals lead themselves, work more effectively with others, and enact inclusive change, we're improving lives, advancing organizations, and transforming communities. We believe that leadership development is a lever that can and will change the world. More information at www.leadbeyond.org

Design Impact provides community leaders with design, social enterprise, and creative development services. The organization embeds designers with nonprofits, develops social enterprise capacity, and delivers design consultations to development projects worldwide. By spreading social innovation practices to leading change-makers, Design Impact aims to create more sustainable, desirable, and meaningful solutions to some of society's most pressing needs. More information at www.d-impact.org/

WeSchool, founded in 1977, is a top-ranked Indian business school that aims to transform management education. At WeSchool, the belief is that management education has the potential to influence the country's growth and development. In an era where unarticulated needs require new approaches, being a conventional b-school is not enough. The WeSchool constantly renews its values, challenges convention, and collaborates with corporations, NGOs, and government to design innovative programs that equip today's talent to face tomorrow's challenges. More at www.welingkar.org/

Institute for Future Education, Entrepreneurship and Leadership (iFEEL) is a state-of-the-art residential school located at Lonavla offering specializations in HR, Marketing, Finance, Operations and Information Systems and Technology with a special focus on Entrepreneurship and Leadership. iFEEL nurtures managerial talent to think beyond the traditional system of business and come up with innovative ideas to transform the business environment. More at <http://www.ifeel.edu.in>

Endnotes

¹World Economic Forum: <http://www.weforum.org/community/global-agenda-councils/youth-unemployment-visualization-2013>

²The Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Society for Human Resource Management. (2006). *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce*.

³Van Velsor, E. & Wright, J. (2012). *Expanding the Leadership Equation: Developing Next-Generation Leaders*. [White Paper]. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

⁴Anand, G., (2013). India Graduates Millions, but Too Few Are Fit to Hire. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703515504576142092863219826.html>

⁵Chowdhury, K. (2011). *Young India lacks soft skills: Survey*. India Today. Retrieved from <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/a-survey-finds-a-majority-of-graduates-lack-adequate-soft-skills-to-be-employed/1/134857.html>

⁶For more information about Leadership Beyond Boundaries: www.leadbeyond.org

⁷Evaluation methods included surveys, interviews and focus groups with faculty and students, as well as six days of on-site program observation. For more information about evaluating leadership development programs, visit www.ccl.org/evaluation.



About the Center for Creative Leadership

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) is a top-ranked, global provider of executive education that accelerates strategy and business results by unlocking the leadership potential of individuals and organizations. Founded in 1970, CCL offers an array of research-based programs, products and services for leaders at all levels. Ranked among the world's Top 10 providers of executive education by *Bloomberg Businessweek* and the *Financial Times*, CCL is headquartered in Greensboro, NC, with offices in Colorado Springs, CO; San Diego, CA; Brussels, Belgium; Moscow, Russia; Singapore; New Delhi – NCR, India; Johannesburg, South Africa; Shanghai, China; and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



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