

AN MBA WITH FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

We use company growth as a measure of business success, and GDP growth as a measure of social prosperity. What do we do when we cannot grow any further?

“If all success is evaluated in terms of growth and as long as we want to live within planetary boundaries, we must deal with an equation that does not add up,” says Lin Lerpold, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for the MBA programmes at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE).

The financial crises exposed serious weaknesses in our financial systems and the resulting debate, along with climate change concern and an increasing population, has brought the role of business in society into question.

SSE has integrated responsibility and sustainability into large parts of its MBA programme and curriculum since 2011. This has been an adaptation to demands for responsible leadership and the necessity posed by our century's most important business challenge. To this end, SSE's teaching on sustainable business includes economic development, environmental concerns and societal challenges as they pertain to business, but also includes, for instance, understanding bribery and corruption and human rights issues in global chains.

“We have placed the course Creating Shared Value at the very beginning of the programme in order to raise the level of critical thinking early on and to better prepare future leaders for the complex and multi perspective challenges of our shared future. In this way, our students retain an awareness of these perspectives throughout their programmes in, for instance, courses on finance, marketing and strategy,” says Professor Lerpold.

Knowledge leads to insight

“The programme develops participants' critical thinking simultaneously linking to sustainable innovation and multi-stakeholder perspectives. Sustainable innovation deals with how win-win propositions are created in which businesses and consumers, as well as society, have something to gain. With multi-stakeholder perspectives, participants gain insight into the challenges when doing



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Lin Lerpold, Associate Professor & Associate Dean, MBA programmes, SSE

business in developing and emerging markets with diverse business partners. This might involve working conditions and wage levels but also corruption in global supply chains,” says Professor Lerpold, she continues: “Several former students have reported that they have increased their sustainability efforts in their companies or refocused their strategic planning with an emphasis on these challenges. I recently met a former student who said: ‘You’ve made my job more difficult, because now I suddenly see the challenges and must do something about it.’”

The Stockholm School of Economics is a European leader in education and research and has become a forerunner in integrating sustainability into their MBA programme. ■

Further information

To find out more please visit: www.hhs.se/mba