

PRiME

*an initiative of the
United Nations Global Compact*

**Gordon
Institute
of Business
Science**
University
of Pretoria

Sharing Information on Progress 2026

Gordon Institute of Business
Science (GIBS)

September 2026

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About the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a United Nations-supported initiative founded in 2007 that aims to raise the profile of sustainability in their classrooms through Seven Principles focused on serving society and safeguarding our planet.

PRME engages business and management schools to ensure they provide future leaders with the skills needed to balance economic and sustainability goals, while drawing attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligning academic institutions with the work of the UN Global Compact. Driven by its mission to transform management education, PRME equips today's business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change tomorrow. As a voluntary initiative with over 800 signatories worldwide, PRME has become the largest organized relationship between the United Nations and management-related higher education institutions.



“ The PRME initiative was launched to nurture responsible leaders of the future. Never has this task been more important. Bold leadership and innovative thinking are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Antonio Guterres

Secretary-General (2017 - Present)

United Nations

”

Principles of PRME



Purpose

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.



Values

We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.



Teach

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.



Research

We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.



Partner

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.



Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.



Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, all 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted a plan for achieving a better future for all – laying out a path over the next 15 years to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet. At the heart of Agenda 2030 are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 related targets that address the most important economic, social, environmental and governance challenges of our time. The SDGs clearly define the world we want – applying to all nations and leaving no one behind. Successful implementation of the SDGs will require all players to champion this agenda; the role of higher education is critical to this.





Getting Started

This section provides foundational information about Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), including key details and basic institutional data.

Mission

A proudly Africa-based institution, GIBS is committed to serving, inspiring and advancing world-class business practices across the continent and beyond. We embrace a humane-centric approach to business; striving to make business healthier and more sustainable through decisive leadership, long-term strategic intent, and the development of inclusive, equitable, diverse and climate-sensitive business environments.

GIBS's mission is: *"To improve responsible individual and organisational performance in South Africa and our broader African environment through high-quality business and management education".*

GIBS's mission aligns with the University of Pretoria's emphasis on quality, relevance, diversity and sustainability across research, teaching and learning, and engagement with society and communities. This alignment situates the School's commitment to responsible management education within the University's broader institutional purpose.

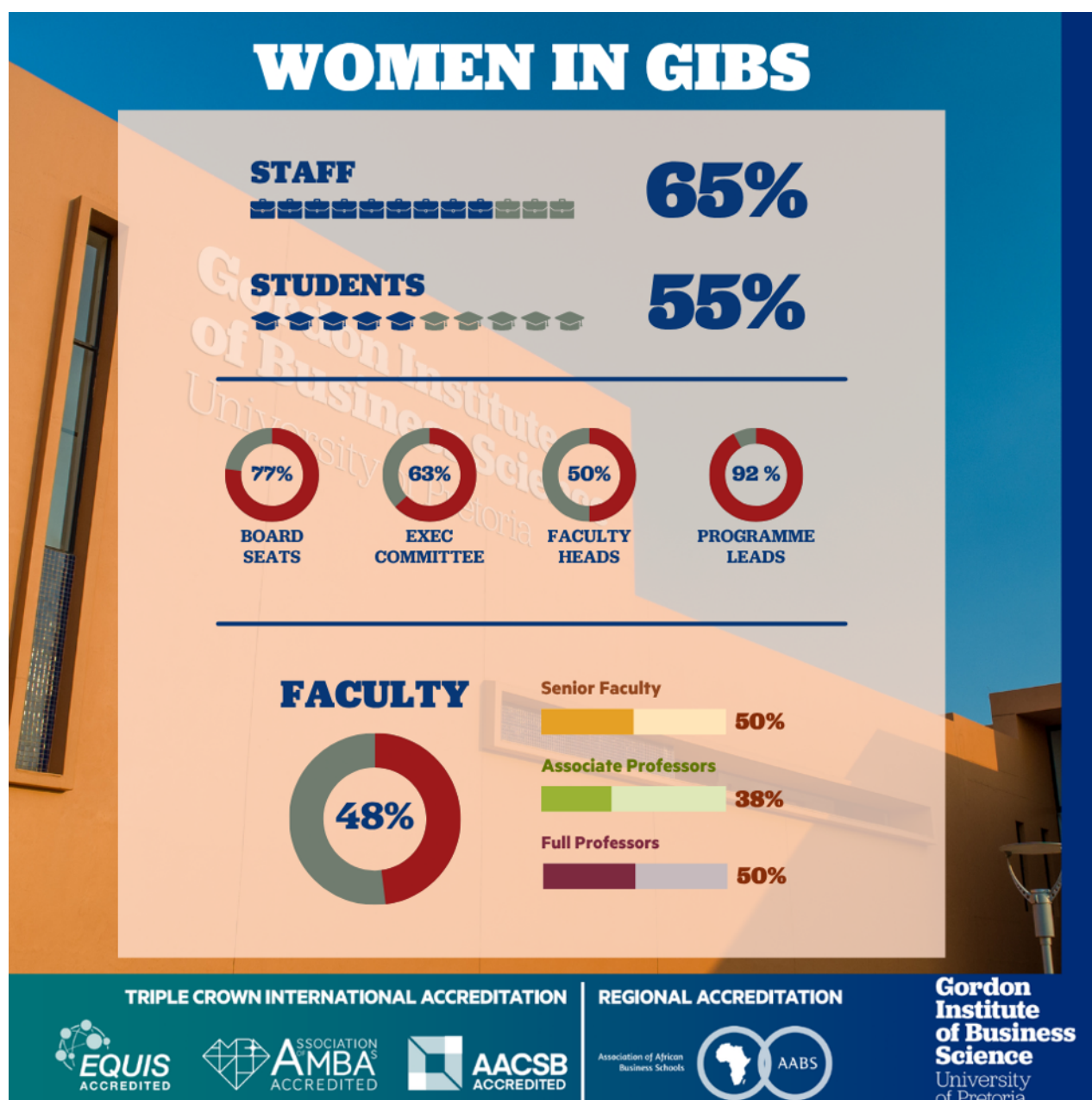
Strategically, GIBS seeks to be known as a responsible institution focusing on climate-, digital- and humane-centred leadership development. Leading an organisation in responsible ways implies balancing economic, social and environmental considerations. This goes to the heart of the UN SDGs around which much of the School's teaching, research and community engagement activities revolve.

The GIBS mission focuses specifically on South Africa and beyond. It serves as an acknowledgement that African countries are connected, historically, economically, technologically and culturally, and that GIBS is committed to collaborating with other institutions and organisations across the Continent, in the areas of teaching and learning, research and thought leadership, and innovation.

GIBS sets out to deliver on its mission by:

- Providing education, research and thought leadership on issues that impact the economy and society and are aligned to the UN SDGs.
- Using the teaching and learning and curricula development processes to enable students to develop personal insights and mindfulness, leading to responsible leadership and management.
- Offering scalable, problem-based and impactful learning that develops relevant, implementable skills and fosters changes in mindset.
- Using GIBS's reputation and convening powers to attract leading local and international thinkers, academics, policymakers and influencers to contribute to dialogue, knowledge sharing and advocacy on issues pertaining to selected SDGs and key business and social problems.
- Enhancing access for minorities and designated groups to high-quality business education through the Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP).

- Having faculty who are actively engaged in practice, are experienced professionals, and work with business to inform their teaching methods and research agenda informed by local relevance and a global mindset.
- Establishing partnerships with businesses and business schools in the broader African region as part of the School's internationalisation initiatives.
- Empowering women through entrepreneurship and leadership programmes. GIBS's commitment to women's development is further demonstrated by female representation across different areas of the School, as detailed in the figure below.



2025 Social Impact Female Leaders at GIBS

Vision

GIBS's vision was revised in 2021 to emphasise the importance of healthier and more sustainable businesses. It is: "To inspire exceptional performance in our pursuit to make business healthier". Healthy businesses are those that anticipate, adapt to, and even embrace change, and have capable leaders who can take the necessary tough decisions to ensure sustainability, but without compromising ethics and a humane-centred approach.

GIBS's vision translates into tangible impact, driving healthier, more sustainable businesses and communities. The infographic below highlights the School's contribution to shaping leaders, fostering innovation, and creating long-term value.



GIBS Impact slide 2025.

Strategy

The School's values

Within the first few years of GIBS's establishment, the School's values were derived through a comprehensive process that included inputs from different levels of staff. The values for many years have reflected seven important themes: customer-centricity, people-centricity, innovation,

commitment, integrity, accountability, and people development. Over a two-year period ending 2023, GIBS initiated a Values Refresh project to review the seven values and develop a more succinct, impactful set that would integrate more easily across all staff levels and external stakeholder groups. A group of senior managers at GIBS, under the guidance of the Human Capital Development (HCD) unit, led the project, which involved in-depth consultations with the School's leadership, management and staff. This resulted in the formulation of four revised values and supporting behaviours, shown below.



GIBS's revised values and supporting behaviours.

The revised values encompass the original seven values that have shaped the 'GIBS Magic' for the past two decades, while providing clearer guidance to staff and students on acting responsibly, ethically and compassionately, and continually innovating and evolving. Following the completion of the Values Refresh project, the HCD team began implementing and embedding the revised values across the School. This work includes integrating the values into recruitment, training and development, and coaching processes, supported by targeted internal campaigns highlighting each

value. The values were also introduced to external stakeholders during 2024. In addition, GIBS Rockstars, a specially designed peer-recognition platform that enables colleagues to acknowledge behaviours demonstrating the GIBS values, was aligned with the revised framework.

Strategy Alignment

Strategy

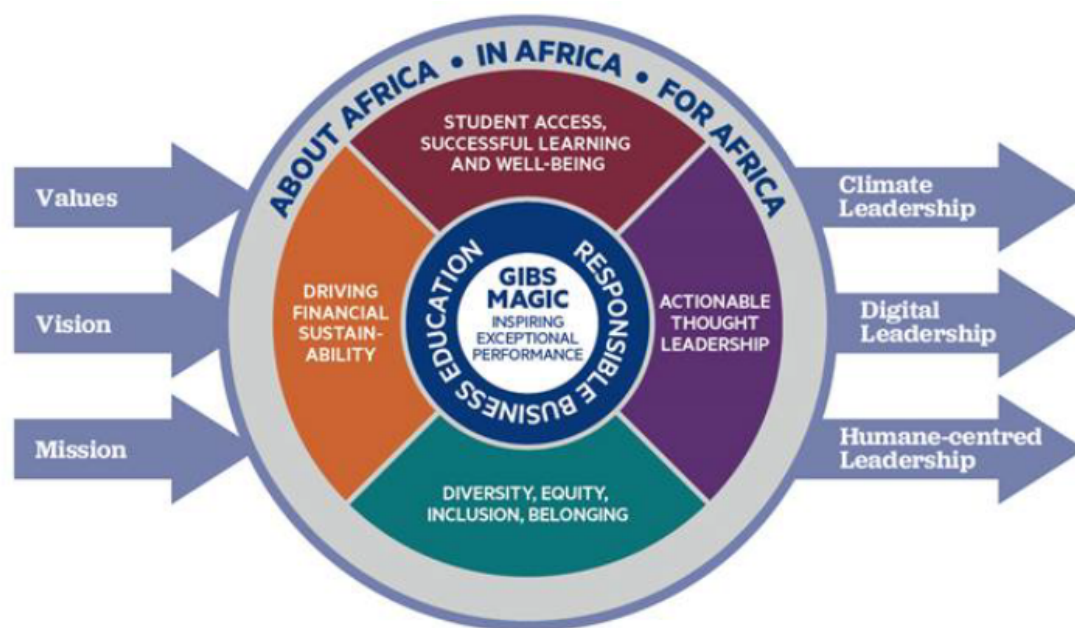
GIBS Strategic Positioning

At the time of this report, GIBS continues to operate within its current strategic positioning as a purpose-driven, world-class African business school that champions African excellence in responsible management education. Building on the vision and mission outlined above, the School seeks to develop better leaders, better businesses and better societies through ethically grounded and contextually relevant education, research, partnerships and engagement. This positioning reflects GIBS's commitment to addressing the interconnected economic, social, technological and environmental challenges facing Africa and the World.

This strategic positioning is currently under review following the recent finalisation of Thrive UP 2038, the University of Pretoria's long-term strategy for 2026–2038. The University strategy provides the institutional framework within which GIBS is refining its future direction, particularly through its emphasis on transformative education, research, engagement and innovation; human dignity; social and environmental justice; ethical leadership; inclusion; and the common good. Extensive consultations have already taken place to ensure that the evolving GIBS strategy builds on the School's established strengths while aligning its contribution to responsible management education, leadership development, management research, business partnerships and organisational practice with the University's strategic direction. The review is progressing as planned and remains on track for finalisation in 2026.

Strategic Direction and Objectives

Pending completion of the strategic review, GIBS's current strategic positioning, goals and priorities remain in effect and continue to be represented through the School's strategy wheel. The strategy wheel is the principal mechanism used to communicate and reinforce the strategy among internal and external stakeholders. It also guides the development of detailed plans and initiatives and provides a reference point for evaluating the School's activities and offerings. The current strategy wheel is illustrated below.



GIBS's strategy wheel.

Some years ago a strategic review with stakeholders led GIBS to foreground the 'GIBS Magic' concept within the School's current strategy. 'GIBS Magic' expresses the promise that the School makes to its students, employees, clients and other stakeholders to strive for excellence in everything it does. Rather than representing a new aspiration, it articulates a set of behaviours that the School has consistently sought to demonstrate and that stakeholders experience through lively classroom engagement, an energetic campus environment, continued innovation, strong institutional outputs, and visible care for staff and students. 'GIBS Magic' therefore reflects the combination of excellence, distinctive practices and a positively memorable stakeholder experience.

Strategic goals, plans and objectives

The leadership team that drives the strategic planning process at GIBS is led by the Dean and the Deputy Dean. GIBS has four strategic themes, aligned to the University of Pretoria, which together relate to the building of knowledge, skills, opportunities and influence across the African continent. They are:

- Student access, successful learning and well-being;
- Actionable thought leadership;
- Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging; and
- Driving financial sustainability.

Each of the GIBS business units has its own strategic plan with measurable objectives. For example, the strategic plan of the Academic Education unit (which mainly targets employed professionals and executives) is geared towards providing high-quality business and management education that emphasises responsible performance in an organisational context. The strategic plan of the Corporate

Education unit (which also mainly targets employed professionals and executives) is geared towards catalysing agency and mobilising leaders who will bring about positive change in society. The strategic plan of the Entrepreneurship Development Academy (which mainly targets underserved individuals and communities outside of the corporate sector) is geared towards providing skills training and helping clients to make inroads into new networks and to pursue entrepreneurship opportunities. One way in which the strategic plan is operationalised throughout the School is through the Performance Enablement System, which is aligned with the strategic goals.

Strategy Alignment

Integrating the GIBS SDG Framework into Strategic Priorities for Responsible Management

Education

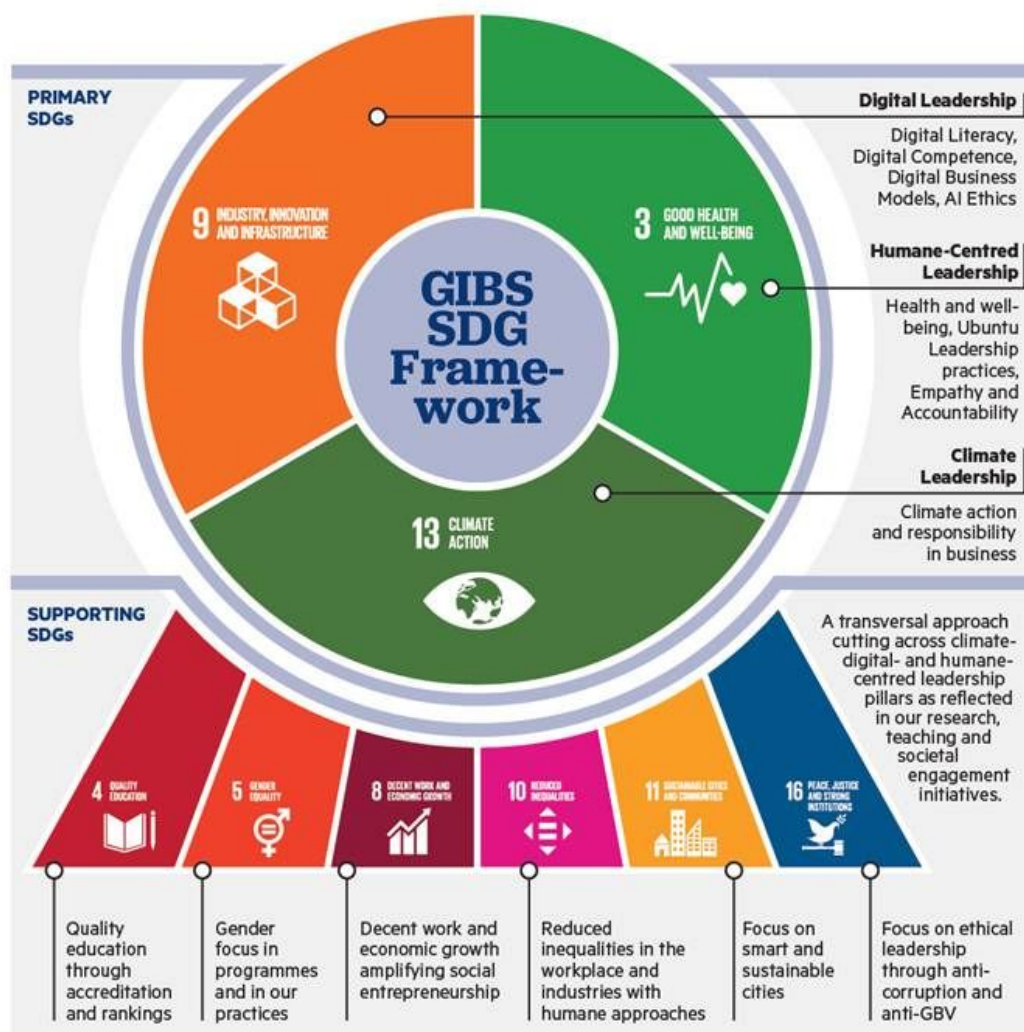
SDG Framework priorities

GIBS has embedded sustainable development, the common good and quality education into its institutional strategy through a focused SDG-aligned framework that guides the School's research, teaching and stakeholder engagement. The framework demonstrates GIBS's commitment to responsible and accountable management education by identifying three primary Sustainable Development Goals and six supporting SDGs, each operationalised through transversal themes and leadership pillars.

At the centre of the framework are three primary SDGs:

- **SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**, which we advance through our focus on digital leadership. GIBS integrates digital literacy, competence, ethical AI, and digital business models into curricula and executive education, enabling future leaders to drive responsible innovation.
- **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being**, promoted via our Humane-Centred Leadership pillar, which emphasises Ubuntu leadership practices, empathy, and personal accountability.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action**, where we instil responsibility in business leaders to act on climate risks, support climate resilience, and lead sustainable transitions.

These three pillars – Digital Leadership, Humane-Centred Leadership, and Climate Leadership – form the structural core of the GIBS SDG Framework and cut across disciplines. This transversal approach shapes how we design programmes, conduct research, and work with business, government, and civil society.



GIBS SDG Framework

Supporting these primary SDGs, we operationalise the following:

- **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** We maintain global standards through continuous accreditation and ranking, embedding SDG content in learning outcomes.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** We promote gender inclusivity in programmes, leadership, and institutional culture.
- **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Our work in social entrepreneurship and inclusive growth strengthens job creation and business for good.
- **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities):** We address workplace inequality through inclusive policies and humane-centred design in our organisational practices.
- **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities):** Urban innovation and smart cities are taught in executive education and research engagements.

- **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions):** Our leadership development fosters ethical conduct, anti-corruption awareness, and initiatives to counter gender-based violence.

GIBS and Business Schools for Climate Leadership Africa

GIBS's climate-leadership initiatives reinforce the SDG Framework, particularly SDG 13. As a founding member of Business Schools for Climate Leadership (BS4CL) Africa in 2022, GIBS has taken a leading role in advancing climate action and education across the continent. In 2024, the School developed and hosted the BS4CL Africa website and launched its LinkedIn page to expand outreach. Faculty and leadership have contributed actively to the BS4CL Africa webinar series, engaging in global discussions on Africa's climate challenge, energy transition and the economics of climate change. In 2025, GIBS sponsored the BS4CL Africa Climate Leadership White Paper Series, in collaboration with Strathmore Business School.

At the academic level, GIBS introduced a new MBA specialisation on Climate Leadership and Sustainability, partnered with Exeter Business School for international electives, and launched two new climate-focused masters electives: Fundamentals of Climate Change for Business: An African Perspective and Financing Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. Faculty members have produced thought leadership outputs, including Financial Times–published cases and EFMD award-winning teaching cases on climate transitions. A further elective was introduced in 2025, to expand the suite of electives to include Business Strategies for Nature and Biodiversity and take the climate discussion to a broader debate around the natural environment.

Through these initiatives, GIBS connects global frameworks with African realities and translates its SDG-aligned strategy into partnerships, thought leadership and leadership-development opportunities that contribute to the continent's sustainable future.



Institutional History

Institutional History

In 2025, GIBS marked its 25th anniversary by reflecting on how its founding purpose has evolved through teaching, research, partnerships, practice and knowledge-sharing. GIBS 25th connected the School's achievements over its first quarter-century with its future ambition to remain a world-class, proudly African institution that develops responsible leaders, generates relevant knowledge and

contributes to better businesses and societies. The anniversary therefore served both as a commemoration and as an opportunity to consider how these foundations could support a deeper contribution to responsible leadership, sustainable development and inclusive prosperity.

GIBS at a glance
Globally accredited, proudly African

Accreditations:
 • "Triple Crown" International Accreditation - EQUIS (EU), AMBA (UK) and AACSB (USA).
 • African Accreditation - Association of African Business Schools (AABS)
 • National Accreditation - Council on Higher Education (CHE), SA Board for People Practices (SABPP), and Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

Memberships:
 European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) | Association of African Business Schools (AABS) | The South African Business Schools Association (SABSA) | Global Business Schools Network (GBSN) | United Nations (UN) Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) | Consortium for University-based Executive Education (UNICON) | Central and East European Management Development Association (CEEMAN) | The Executive MBA Council (EMBA-C) | International Coaching Federation (ICF) | Responsible Research for Business and Management (RRBM).

Centres & Initiatives
 to support entrepreneurship development, African markets, business ethics, responsible finance, leadership and dialogue, media leadership, and professional business coaching.

Based in Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa's economic hub

FT Leader among global leaders Top 50
 UK Financial Times, Executive Education Rankings, 2024

GIBS ranks #9 amongst large schools
 Corporate Insights 2024 Better World MBA Ranking

Winner LinkedIn Learning Champion Award 2023

#1 First Choice for Students & Employers
 Financial Mail MBA Rankings 2023

A responsible business school firmly rooted in the African context

GIBS MBA ranks in the top 40% globally
 13 QS Executive MBA Rankings 2024

Accredited Programmes
 Employer's choice for Executive Education Financial Mail 2023

B-BBEE Level 1 Contributor

International Partnerships

Gordon Institute of Business Science University of Pretoria

Student Positive Impact (PIR) Level 4 Rating 2024

Globally renowned "Triple Crown" status
 UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
 UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
 YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
 Updated as at March 2025

GIBS at a glance

A business school founded with purpose

GIBS began operating in 2000 as a division of the University of Pretoria, established through a generous endowment from businessman and philanthropist Sir Donald Gordon. Professor Nick Binedell was appointed the School's founding director and subsequently became the first Dean when GIBS was conferred the status of a faculty of the University.

The establishment of GIBS represented a new chapter in the University of Pretoria's long history of management education. When the School opened its doors, it succeeded the University's Pretoria-based Graduate School of Management, which had been established in 1949. The decision to locate the new School in Sandton, Johannesburg, was purposeful. It positioned GIBS in South Africa's principal business centre, with strong transport connections to other economic centres in South Africa and across the African continent.

This proximity to business became a defining part of the GIBS identity. From the outset, the School intended to be a business-responsive institution that offered high-quality and relevant programmes through innovative forms of delivery, while actively engaging with the communities it served. GIBS also

recognised that its success would depend on developing international connections and a global outlook without losing sight of the local, regional and continental environments in which African leaders and organisations operate.

This global perspective and African contextual relevance continue to shape GIBS's Academic, Corporate and Social Education offerings, research, partnerships and strategic engagements. The School's first MBA intake comprised 58 students. This marked the beginning of a journey that would see GIBS develop from a new entrant in the South African business-school landscape into an internationally recognised African institution.



The GIBS campus main entrance.

From being 'close to business' to creating broader societal impact

The founding aspiration to be the business school 'close to business' established an enduring orientation towards relevance, application and engagement with practice. Over time, however, GIBS's understanding of what it means to be 'close to business' has broadened. Being 'close to business' increasingly requires being close to the challenges confronting business and society. It means engaging with inequality, sustainability, climate change, technological disruption, ethical leadership and inclusive economic growth. It also requires an understanding of the distinctive institutional, social and economic circumstances facing organisations operating in Africa.

The GIBS 25th story therefore reflects both continuity and evolution: the School has retained its commitment to relevance, application and engagement with practice while broadening its contribution to address the challenges confronting business and society.



Aerial view of the GIBS campus.

Formalising responsible management education

GIBS became a Signatory to the United Nations Initiative known as the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in 2009. This was an important milestone in the School's institutional development. It connected GIBS's purpose-led founding ethos and commitment to socially responsive business education with an international framework for responsible management education.

PRME provided a common framework through which the School could connect leadership development with ethics, accountability, sustainability, inclusive prosperity and the wider responsibilities of business in society. Following the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) in 2015, this commitment increasingly included consideration of how teaching, research, partnerships and institutional practice could contribute to sustainable development.

PRME gave clearer expression and structure to principles already evident in GIBS's commitment to relevant education, African contextual understanding, entrepreneurship, responsible leadership and engagement with business and society. It also connected the School to an international peer community through which it could learn and contribute an African perspective to responsible management education.

From PRME Signatory to PRME Champion 2018 to 2025

GIBS entered its first PRME Champions cycle in 2018-2019 and continued as a Champion for the extended 2020-2022 cycle and the 2023 cycle. The transition from PRME Signatory to PRME Champion marked an important stage in the School's development. It indicated that GIBS was moving beyond formal commitment towards deeper institutional integration, experimentation, peer learning and active contribution to the international PRME community.

PRME Champion participation provided opportunities for GIBS to collaborate with other leading business schools on the practical challenges of integrating responsible management education into curricula, research, partnerships and institutional systems. During the 2018–2019 cycle, GIBS participated in the group that developed the Blueprint for SDG Integration into Curriculum, Research and Partnerships, launched at the 2020 PRME Global Forum. This work strengthened the School's engagement with the UN SDGs and contributed to a more systematic understanding of how they could be incorporated into the academic and institutional work of a business school.

Participation in the PRME Champions community extended GIBS's established partnership and convening capabilities into an international responsible management education network. It enabled the School to contribute African perspectives to collaborative projects and peer learning while drawing on the experience of other institutions. In 2022, GIBS was invited to be a founding member of PRME Chapter Africa and then served on the Chapter Africa Steering Committee from 2023 to 2025.

GIBS was also selected for the 2024–2025 PRME Champions cycle, continuing its participation in a global community committed to raising standards in responsible management education and advancing the UN SDGs.

Leadership through successive phases of growth

GIBS's development over its first 25 years can be understood through successive periods of leadership, with each phase building on the foundations established during the previous one. Professor Nick Binedell led the School from its establishment until 2015. This founding era established many of the characteristics that continue to distinguish GIBS: proximity to business, academic ambition, experimentation and innovation, international connectivity, and a commitment to understanding management through African and emerging-market perspectives.

Professor Nicola Kleyn succeeded Professor Binedell as Dean in 2015. This second phase placed greater emphasis on elevating the School's profile and expanding its research output, while foregrounding research centres and think-tanks alongside the academic agenda. It strengthened the School's ambition not only to educate leaders, but also to generate ideas and knowledge capable of influencing business practice and public debate. At the end of her term in 2020, during the profound

disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, Professor Kleyn departed for the Rotterdam School of Management at Erasmus University. Professor Morris Mthombeni was appointed interim Dean and was subsequently confirmed as Dean in 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the connections among public health, inequality, educational access, digital inclusion, organisational resilience and responsible leadership into sharper focus. It reinforced the need for business schools to develop leaders who could manage uncertainty while remaining attentive to human dignity, ethical responsibility and the unequal effects of organisational decisions.

Under Professor Mthombeni's leadership, GIBS has continued to evolve its strategy in response to a rapidly changing environment. Priorities have included expanding local and international partnerships, strengthening the School's footprint in Africa, broadening research capabilities in contemporary disciplines, accelerating investment in digital technologies and skills, and advancing climate leadership.

Underlying these priorities is the conviction that Africa's future growth and prosperity depend substantially on developing capable, ethical and responsible leaders. These leaders must be able to recognise and use emerging opportunities, including those created through digital advancement, while addressing climate change, inequality and the continent's distinctive social, institutional and economic challenges.

Dean Morris Mthombeni has described the School's overarching ambition as developing a "purpose-driven, world-class business school, championing Africa to the world." This ambition combines international quality with African relevance and reinforces the idea that the School's contribution should be assessed not only through academic and organisational achievement, but also through its influence on leadership, business and society.



Professor Morris Mthombeni, GIBS Dean, addressing staff during the GIBS 25-year celebration on campus in 2025.

Developing responsible leaders

One of the most significant dimensions of the GIBS 25th story is the School's sustained contribution to leadership development.

Over 25 years, GIBS's experience has reinforced the understanding that business education must extend beyond the development of technical management competence. Business schools influence how current and future decision-makers understand their responsibilities, approach difficult trade-offs, engage stakeholders and consider the wider consequences of organisational choices.

Responsible leadership has become increasingly important in environments characterised by uncertainty, technological transformation, socioeconomic inequality and environmental pressure. For an African business school, this responsibility is particularly significant. Leaders must understand global developments while possessing the contextual intelligence required to respond effectively to the opportunities and complexities of African markets and societies.

GIBS therefore seeks to develop leaders who can balance organisational performance with ethical conduct, human well-being, stakeholder responsibility and long-term societal value. This approach applies the School's commitment to relevant management education to contemporary priorities in climate leadership, digital leadership and inclusive prosperity.

Building an African knowledge institution

Another important dimension of GIBS's first 25 years has been its evolution as a producer of knowledge. The School launched its doctoral programme in 2004 and subsequently expanded its research contribution through peer-reviewed journal articles, books and book chapters, case studies, white papers, reports and applied research. This growth reflects an important institutional shift. From its foundations as a School deliberately 'close to business', GIBS has developed into an institution capable of combining proximity to practice with increasingly significant research and thought leadership.

The production and dissemination of African management knowledge have been particularly important. GIBS's first published case study appeared in 2008. By the School's 25th anniversary, more than 262,200 GIBS cases had been sold through Ivey across 134 countries. The significance of this achievement extends beyond the numbers. Cases grounded in African organisations, markets and management challenges help ensure that African experience enters management classrooms internationally. They allow African business practice to contribute to global management knowledge rather than positioning the continent solely as a recipient of ideas generated elsewhere.

This approach aligns closely with the PRME Principle of Research, which recognises the importance of studying organisations, institutions, people and society in ways that advance responsible management practice. GIBS has explicitly recognised the continued underrepresentation of Africa in global academic output and the corresponding importance of producing credible knowledge from the continent. The growth of GIBS's research centres, think-tanks and applied research capabilities further demonstrates its commitment to research that connects academic rigour with the questions confronting organisations, leaders, policymakers and societies.

Innovation in teaching and learning

Innovation has also been a defining characteristic of the School's first quarter-century. GIBS has consistently experimented with new approaches to management education and knowledge dissemination. Over its history, these have included digital learning platforms, multimedia channels and approaches that connect personal development with applied learning.

The establishment of the Personal and Applied Learning (PAL) unit in 2013 institutionalised an educational approach that recognises the importance of connecting intellectual development with personal insight, leadership practice and application. Not every experiment was intended to continue in its original form. Experimentation itself enabled the School to learn, adapt and continually reconsider how management education could remain relevant as technologies, organisations and learner expectations changed.

This orientation supports the PRME Principle of Teach, which encourages institutions to transform learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into curricula and pedagogy. Digital transformation has created a further frontier for innovation. GIBS's increasing investment in digital technologies and capabilities is accompanied by recognition of the responsibility to prepare leaders not merely to adopt emerging technologies, but to consider how these technologies can be used ethically and responsibly to support organisations and society.

The School's curriculum has also evolved to reflect this broader understanding of responsible management. One example is the redesign of the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration core course, from Business Ethics to Ethics and Sustainability. The revised course connects ethical decision-making with business purpose, stakeholder responsibility and an action-oriented sustainability agenda. This represents a move away from treating ethics as an isolated subject towards understanding ethics and sustainability as interconnected dimensions of responsible management practice.

Partnership and the power of convening

Over its first 25 years, GIBS developed extensive local, continental and international networks and considerable convening capacity. Its ability to bring together business leaders, academics, policymakers, civil-society organisations, students, alumni and other stakeholders has become an important part of the School's impact.

Partnership has been embedded in GIBS's trajectory from its earliest years. International collaborations have included work with institutions such as Harvard Business School, with which GIBS jointly ran the Making Markets Work programme from 2005. More recent developments have included collaborative executive leadership education with LaLiga Business School.

This emphasis on collaboration supports the PRME Principle of Partner. The complex challenges confronting Africa and the wider world cannot be addressed by business schools, businesses, governments or civil-society organisations acting independently. Sustainable change requires dialogue, reciprocal partnerships and the capacity to convene stakeholders around shared challenges. GIBS's participation as a PRME Signatory, PRME Champion and a member of PRME Chapter Africa, extends this collaborative approach through peer learning and joint projects, while creating a channel for African management experience to inform international responsible-management discussions.

International recognition anchored in Africa

As GIBS's academic, research and partnership capabilities developed, so too did its international recognition. An important early milestone came in 2003, when the School achieved its first ranking among the Financial Times Top 45 business schools globally. In 2004, GIBS became the first African business school to feature in the Financial Times Executive Education survey.

In 2021, GIBS became the 113th institution globally to achieve the "Triple Crown" of EQUIS, AMBA and AACSB accreditation. This achievement recognised the School's academic quality, governance, internationalisation, connection with practice and commitment to continuous improvement. In the same year, GIBS's 2020 Sharing Information on Progress report won a PRME award in Recognition of Excellence in Reporting. This recognition marked an important development in the School's accountability and reporting practices. It demonstrated GIBS's growing ability to provide a coherent account of its responsible management commitments, progress and institutional learning. In June 2026, GIBS was recognised at the PRME Global Forum as one of ten schools receiving an Excellence in Reporting award for its 2025 SIP report.

In 2023 Dean Morris Mthombeni was appointed to the international PRME Advisory Board and continues to serve in this capacity. GIBS's standing within Africa was further reinforced through accreditation by the Association of African Business Schools in 2024, followed by an extended five-year EQUIS reaccreditation at the beginning of 2025.

These achievements demonstrate that GIBS's international recognition and African orientation are mutually reinforcing: the School's aspiration is to meet international standards of excellence through deep engagement with African organisations, markets and management challenges.

Strengthening institutional leadership and accountability

Professor Mthombeni was confirmed as Dean in 2022, and Professor Louise Whittaker was appointed Deputy Dean. Together, they provided senior sponsorship for a core PRME team comprising colleagues from academic and professional functions. This cross-functional model strengthened the connection between responsible management education, institutional strategy, curriculum, research, partnerships, accreditation, quality assurance and reporting. It also supported the School's progression from individual responsible-management initiatives towards a more coordinated institutional approach.

Professor Whittaker's expertise in strategy, governance and ethics, her responsibilities in academic quality and curriculum, and her participation in PRME's Sharing Information on Progress Impact Sub-Committee further reinforced the relationship between responsible management education, quality assurance, accountability and institutional learning.

By the end of 2023, responsible management education was increasingly integrated across GIBS's leadership, governance, curricula, teaching, research, partnerships, quality systems and reporting. This institution-wide foundation supported the subsequent development of the GIBS SDG Framework, climate-leadership initiatives and the School's broader approach to responsible management education.

GIBS 25th through a responsible management lens

Viewed through a responsible management lens, GIBS 25th connected the School's institutional legacy with the expanding responsibilities facing organisations and leaders. Climate change, digital transformation, inequality and complex social dynamics now sit at the centre of strategic leadership, reinforcing the importance of the School's humane-centred, African and sustainability-oriented approach. The development of these capabilities and continued expansion of the School's African footprint can therefore be understood as interconnected elements of a broader responsible leadership agenda. Viewed through this lens, GIBS 25th served as a bridge between institutional legacy and future responsibility.

From 25 years of achievement to the next era of impact

Its first 25 years established important foundations: academic excellence, proximity to business, African contextual relevance, international connectivity, innovation in learning, applied research, partnership and thought leadership. The task for the next chapter is to harness these capabilities to produce deeper and more measurable impact.

PRME provides an important framework through which to understand this evolution. Its seven Principles of Purpose, Values, Teach, Research, Partner, Practice and Share recognise that responsible management education cannot reside solely within an individual course, research centre or sustainability initiative. It must increasingly influence the institution as a whole. GIBS's articulation of its own purpose similarly positions responsible management as part of the School's broader institutional identity.

GIBS 25th was simultaneously a celebration, a reflection and a recommitment. It recognised the academics, professional staff, students, alumni, leaders, partners, donors, organisations and communities who contributed to the School's first quarter-century, while creating space to consider how its purpose must continue to evolve as expectations of business, leadership and management education change.

During the next 25 years, institutional success will necessarily be measured by more than growth, rankings and accreditations. It will also be visible in the quality and character of the leaders GIBS develops; the relevance and impact of the African knowledge it produces; the transformation it enables within organisations; the networks and partnerships it mobilises; and its contribution to more inclusive, innovative, sustainable and prosperous societies across Africa and beyond.

GIBS enters its next quarter-century with strong foundations and its next phase will require these strengths to produce deeper, more measurable impact through ethical and responsible leadership, climate action, technological transformation, inclusive prosperity, responsibilities to the natural environment, and sustainable development. In this way, being 'close to business' also means being close to the opportunities business can unlock, the challenges it must help solve and the societies it ultimately exists to serve.

Key milestones in GIBS' evolution include:

25 years...

2000

- Officially opened on 14 March by **Sir Donald Gordon** with **Prof Nick Binedell** as Director.
- Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme launched.
- The first customised programme, the Global Executive Development Programme (GEDP), is launched in partnership with Sasol.
- GIBS Forums launched.

2002

- GIBS launches the Nexus programme.
- The inaugural MBA class graduates on 13 May 2002.

2003

- GIBS ranked for the 1st time in the *Financial Times* Top 45 business schools globally.
- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) announced.

2004

- GIBS becomes the first African Business School to be ranked in the FT Executive Education survey.
- **Prof Gill Marcus**, Governor of the South African Reserve Bank, is appointed to the Wendy Appelbaum Chair of Policy, Leadership and Gender Studies.

2005

- GIBS becomes a founding member of the Association of African Business Schools (AABS), and **Prof Nick Binedell** is appointed as the inaugural chair.
- GIBS signs a MoU with the Harvard Business School to jointly run the Making Markets Work programme specifically designed for senior-level manager in Africa's public and private sectors.

2006

- GIBS is ranked as the leading business school in 2006 by the Professional Management Review (PMR).
- GIBS runs the MBA Insights programme on Summit TV.

2007

- GIBS MBA is internationally accredited by AMBA.

2008

- GIBS publishes its first case study.
- GIBS wins the *Sunday Times* Marketing Excellence Award.
- GIBS FN – a series of podcast interviews is launched.

2017

- MBA and DBA programmes reaccredited by AMBA.
- The GIBS 'Nexus' programmes is spotlighted at the 2017 AACSB Deans Conference.

2016

- GIBS receives AACSB accreditation.
- The Business Ethics and Governance Think Tank is established.
- Harvard Business School partners with GIBS to launch the Senior Executive Program in Africa.

2015

- **Prof Nicola Kleyn** is appointed Dean, her tenure was defined by significant advancements in research outputs.
- GIBS Centre for Dynamic Markets wins the Tony Elumelu Foundation Africapitalism Award.

2014

- Entrepreneurship Development Academy (EDA) launched.
- The *Financial Mail* ranks GIBS as the "first choice" and "SA MBA with the best overall reputation".

2013

- PhD programme is launched.
- GIBS introduces PAL (Personal and Applied Learning) as a learning development process in business education.

2012

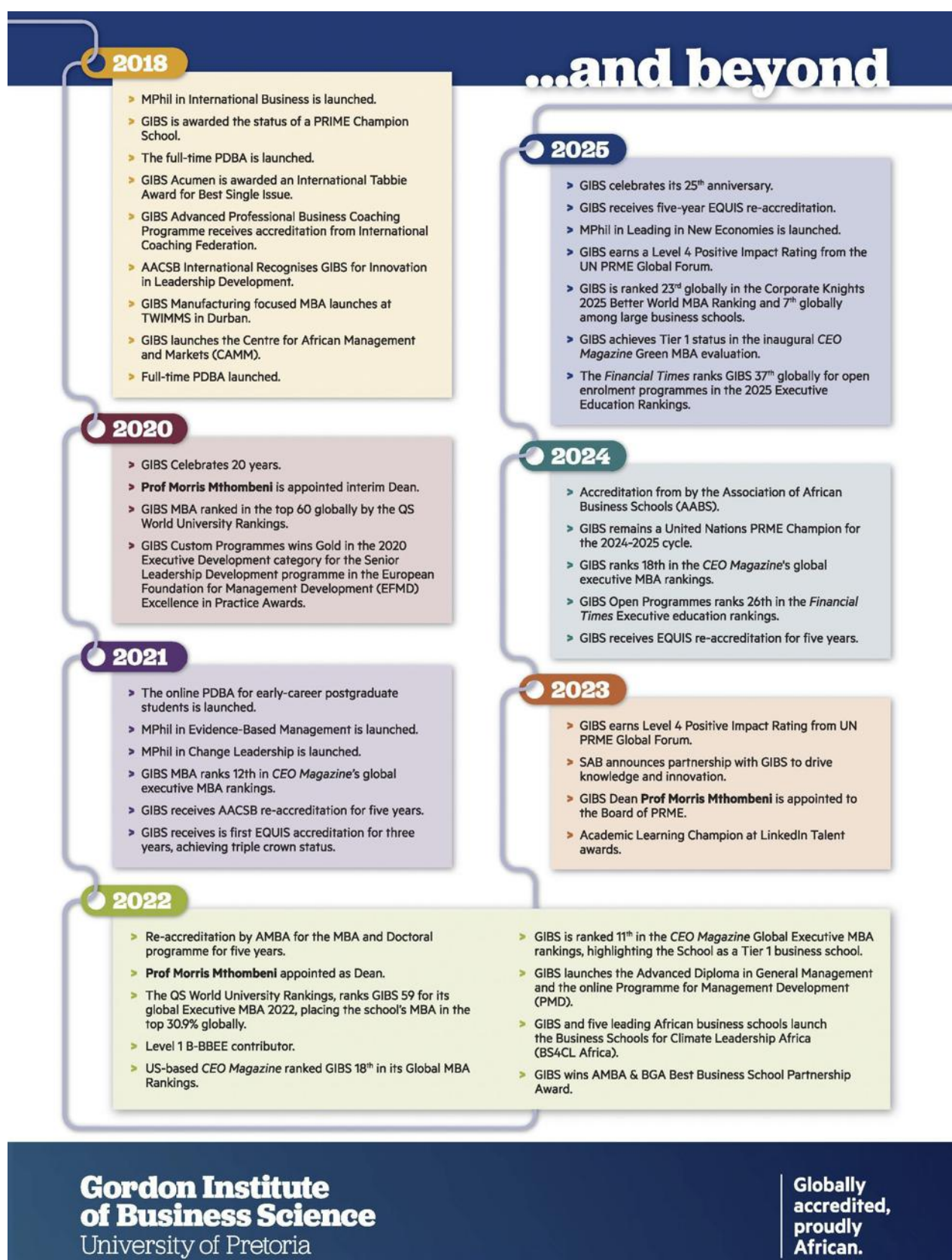
- MBA is awarded AMBA reaccreditation.
- DBA receives its first AMBA accreditation.
- GIBS becomes a member of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).
- The first issue of *The Acumen* is published.

2011

- The Centre for Dynamic Markets is established.
- The GIBS studio is officially opened.

2009

- **Prof Nick Binedell** is appointed as Dean.
- The full-time Entrepreneurship MBA is launched.
- The first GIBS DBA degree is conferred.
- GIBS becomes a member of the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and a signatory of the United Nations (UN) Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).
- The Centre for Business Analysis and Research (CBAR) is established.



Together, these milestones trace GIBS's development from its establishment in 2000 through successive phases of programme growth, leadership transition, international accreditation, partnership and responsible-management engagement.

Graduates & Enrollment

2025 Statistics	Number
Graduates	1312
Faculty & Staff at the University	4609
Faculty & Staff at the Institution	344
Student Enrollment at the University	58238
Student Enrollment at the Institution	4559
Undergraduate Attendance	348
Masters-Level Postgraduate Attendance	636
Doctoral Student Attendance	70
Certificate, Professional Development, or Continuing Education Attendance	5631

Degrees Offered

Masters Programs

-  Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)

Doctoral Programs

-  Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
-  Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.)

Additional

-  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PDBA)
-  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration specialising in General Management (PGDip)
-  MPhil specialising in Change Leadership
-  MPhil specialising in Corporate Strategy
-  MPhil specialising in International Business
-  MPhil specialising in Leading New Economies
-  MPhil specialising in Evidence-Based Management

Undergraduate Degree Programmes

-  Advanced Diploma in General Management (AdvDip GM)
-  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration specialising in General Management (PGDip)
-  Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PDBA)

Masters Degree Programmes

-  MPhil specialising in Evidence-Based Management
-  MPhil specialising in Leading in New Economies
-  MPhil specialising in International Business
-  Master of Business Administration
-  MPhil specialising in Corporate Strategy
-  MPhil specialising in Change Leadership

Postgraduate Degree Programmes

-  Doctoral Programme (DBA)
-  Doctoral Programme (PhD)

Certificates, Professional Development, or Associate Programmes

- 🔗 The Next CMO Programme
- 🔗 Global Executive Development Programme (GEDP)
- 🔗 General Management Programme (GMP)
- 🔗 Programme for Management Development (PMD)
- 🔗 Harvard Business School Senior Executive Program
- 🔗 Nexus Leadership Programme: Leaders as Learners
- 🔗 Social Entrepreneurship Programme
- 🔗 Leading Women Programme
- 🔗 Sustainable Evolution Executive Development Programme (SEED)
- 🔗 Lead for Creative Thinking
- 🔗 Standard Bank Group (SBG) – ESG & Sustainability Advanced Development Programme



Purpose

We advance responsible management education to foster inclusive prosperity in a world of thriving ecosystems.



Letter of Commitment

PRME Principles for Responsible
Management Education

an initiative of 

PRME Champions Letter of Commitment, 2026 - 2027

10 December 2025

Dear PRME Secretariat,

As an institution of higher education actively involved with the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, a United Nations Global Compact initiative, the Gordon Institute of Business Science commits to join the 2026 - 2027 PRME Champions cycle.

In doing so, and agreed upon in the Call for Applications, the Gordon Institute of Business Science commits to meaningfully and consistently participating in the PRME Champions programme by:

- **Core Institutional Team:** Designating a team of two to three representatives and ensuring they have sufficient time, capacity, and resources to fulfil all responsibilities throughout the Champions cycle.
- **Learning Engagement Participation:** Ensuring representation at all Champions learning engagements, including two in-person workshops, two hybrid workshops, and four online webinars during the 2026–2027 cycle.
- **Continuity of Engagement:** Maintaining consistent participation across the cycle, including nominating new representatives if institutional roles or responsibilities change.

The Gordon Institute of Business Science affirms its dedication to advancing responsible management education through the PRME Champions programme by:

- Contributing to collective progress on SDG 4: Quality Education and the Seven Principles of PRME, while also demonstrating these values on the global stage.
- Engaging actively in PRME Commons, including sharing SIP Reports, contributing resources, and participating in global learning and peer exchange.
- Actively joining and contributing to Champions sub-group projects, including ongoing initiatives and new thematic workstreams that strengthen responsible management education globally.
- Adhering to PRME Champions expectations, including attendance at all quarterly in person and/or virtual meetings throughout the two-year period.

The Gordon Institute of Business Science looks forward to joining the 2026–2027 PRME Champions cohort with a sense of purpose and momentum. We recognise the value of working alongside peer institutions that are shaping the future of responsible management education, and we are eager to contribute to the collaborative learning, experimentation, and innovation that define the Champions experience. As we enter this new cycle, we are committed to bringing constructive leadership, sharing insights from our own practice, and engaging meaningfully in the global community that PRME convenes. We are ready to begin this work with enthusiasm and to play an active role in advancing the shared objectives of the Champions network.

Sincerely,



Prof Morris Mthombeni
Dean of the Gordon Institute of Business Science

Definition of Purpose

To advance responsible management education that fosters inclusive prosperity across Africa and beyond. As a proudly African institution, we equip leaders with humane-centred and entrepreneurial mindsets to drive sustainable, equitable, and innovative business practices that create long-term value for organisations, societies, and ecosystems.

Institutional Engagement

76% - 100% of faculty at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing responsible management education, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

Continue telling your story

From student voice to institutional change: GIBS Positive Impact Rating 2025

GIBS Positive Impact Rating 2025: Level 4 Transforming Schools

Student feedback through the independent Positive Impact Rating Survey results provides a means to assess the extent to which GIBS is achieving its purpose.

GIBS has maintained Level 4 - Transforming in the Positive Impact Rating for four consecutive years, including the 2025 cycle. The 2025 evidence demonstrates continuity of external recognition and improvements in how GIBS organised participation and used feedback. The result supports responsible management and societal impact as an integrated institutional commitment.

The significance of the result lies in the process behind it. As described in GIBS's 2025 SIP, seven MBA classes, comprising more than 400 students, were introduced to the survey's purpose. Class representatives supported authentic participation, the Dean's town-hall engagement with preceding PGDip cohorts created earlier awareness, and quantitative and qualitative feedback was analysed to identify practical priorities and communicate how previous input informed action.

EVIDENCE & MEASUREMENT SNAPSHOT

2025 reporting period



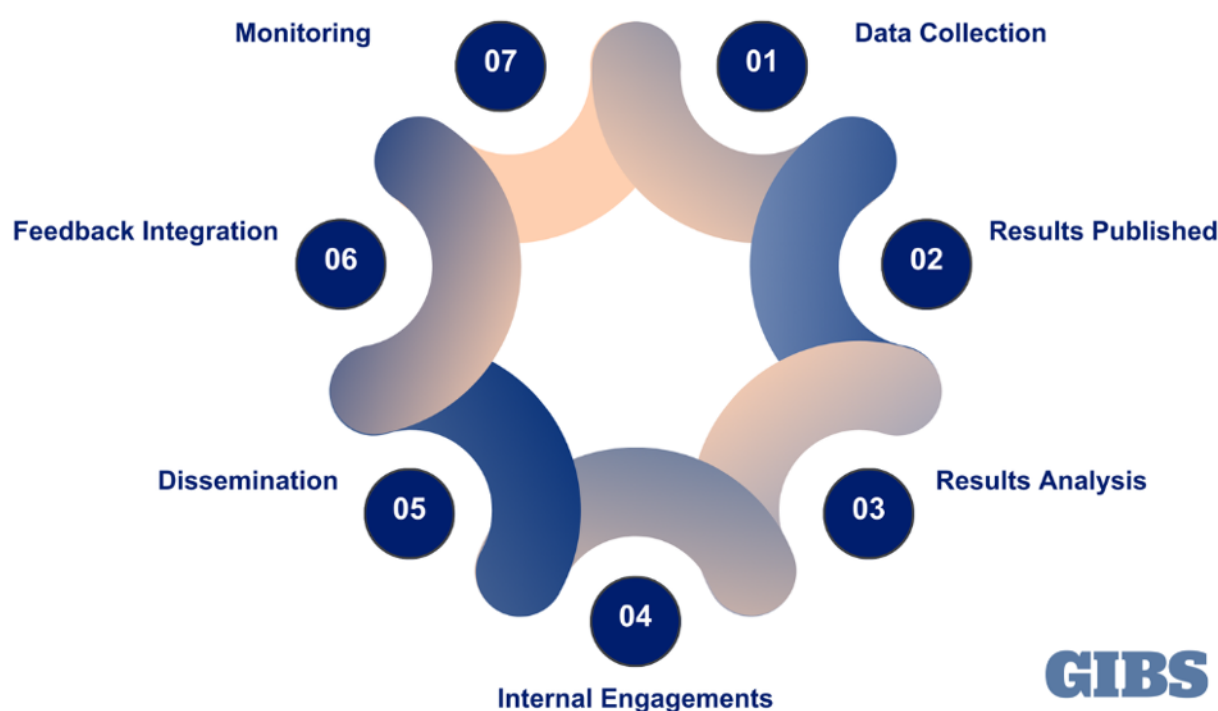
The rating is the external snapshot; the value lies in how student feedback is converted into institutional response.

FROM RATING TO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

PIR as a governance and learning mechanism

The PIR process provides a structured cycle of listening, prioritising, acting and reporting back. The external rating is a snapshot; the institutional value lies in how stakeholder perceptions are considered, translated into priorities and connected to institutional response. This process supports student agency, strengthens accountability and creates a traceable link between feedback and improvement.

Engaging with Feedback



Engaging with Feedback at GIBS





Values

We place organizational responsibility and accountability to society and the planet at the core of what we do.



How We Define Values

A proudly Africa-based institution, GIBS is committed to serving, inspiring and advancing world-class business practices across the continent and beyond. We embrace a human-centric approach to business; striving to make business healthier and more sustainable through decisive leadership, longterm strategic intent, and the development of inclusive, equitable, diverse and climate-sensitive business environments.

Who Champions Responsible Management Education at Our Institution

- ❖ Small team of sustainability leaders
- ❖ Research Centres focusing on key sustainability issues

Student Awareness

76% - 100% of students at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) are aware that we are a PRME Signatory Member.

Student Engagement

76% - 100% of students at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) actively contribute to our work with PRME, advancing RME, or addressing sustainable development challenges through their work.

Values Voices

From New Beginnings to Enduring Impact: Leadership Lessons from the GIBS Deans Desk

Dean's Note

BY PROF. MORRIS MTHOMBENI

From New Beginnings to Enduring Impact: Leadership Lessons from the GIBS Dean's Desk



Prof. Morris Mthombeni

When I penned my first Dean's Note for *Acumen* in Issue 33, I reflected on the nature of leadership transitions and the weight of legacy. That 2020 edition of *Acumen* was a "handover" issue, a bridge between the remarkable vision of my predecessor, Professor Nicola Kleyn, and the new chapter we were about to write together as a GIBS community under my unexpected leadership. I wrote then about the impossibility of excessive flattery in academia and the necessity of gratitude and humility as we navigate change.

Navigating change with purpose

The past five years have tested every aspect of our resilience as an institution. We have weathered the storms of a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, and shifting societal expectations. Yet,

as I observed in that first note, our response has always been to balance immediate challenges with long-term opportunity. We have always planted for tomorrow's harvest, motivated our people, and embraced sustainability – not as a buzzword, but as a lived doctrine.

This ethos of responsible leadership – rooted in the African philosophy of ubuntu – has continued to shape our journey. As I have argued, humane leadership is not a soft ideal but a strategic imperative. It is about shifting from egocentric to allocentric thinking, self to community, and transactional to transformational engagement. Ubuntu, emphasising interconnectedness and respect, is the foundation for building community trust, collaboration, and psychological safety.

A laboratory for experimentation and growth

GIBS has always been more than a business school; it is a laboratory for transformative learning and experimentation. Our willingness to innovate – whether through advancing data-driven management, new pedagogies, or bold partnerships – has kept us at the forefront of African business education and research. We have never been afraid to “push out the boat and experiment”, as I wrote in a recent edition of *Acumen* celebrating our 25th anniversary.

This spirit of experimentation is not just about an Afro-centric management and leadership curriculum exploring technology management or sustainability. It is about fostering a culture where students, faculty, and partners are encouraged to challenge assumptions, test new ideas, learn from failure, and celebrate success, however small. Our commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially in health, well-being, and quality education, has guided our response to crises and our pursuit of inclusive excellence in an ever-polarising global environment.

Listening as a leadership superpower

In a world increasingly defined by noise – literal and figurative – one of the most powerful leadership skills is the ability to listen. In 2025, I naively urged our community to silence the noise and learn to listen to each other and the signals of change around us.

Listening is especially critical in times of uncertainty.

Responsible listening, I argued, is a transformative leadership capability: it builds stronger teams, de-escalates conflict, and uncovers opportunities that the foghorns of distraction might otherwise drown out.

Listening is especially critical in times of uncertainty. I continue to naively advance that whether navigating the complexities of climate change, technological disruption, or social upheaval, leaders must rise above the chaos, seek diverse perspectives, and engage in meaningful dialogue. At GIBS, we have embedded this ethos in our leadership and management development programmes and initiatives, encouraging our students, executive development life-long students, and partners to pause, reflect, and truly hear the voices that matter most – the voices of the vulnerable.

Championing humane and ethical leadership

At GIBS, we take comfort in the knowledge that being humane-centred is our cultural inheritance as Africans, and a competitive advantage that we leverage. As we expand our focus to embrace

I’m asking our students, alumni, and stakeholders to dream with us.

the technological economic environment and the human-digital link, we remain committed to the universal values that define us: empathy, respect, and the pursuit of the common good. Our partnerships with organisations such as Life Healthcare, Lyra, and October Health, and our research-led engagement work in areas such as anti-corruption, gender-based violence, and neurodiversity are proof of our belief that business can – and must – be a force for positive change. We work tirelessly to ensure that managers, leaders, and entrepreneurs in the GIBS ecosystem are a force for good.

Looking ahead: A call to action

An impactful quarter-century now stares at us from the rear-view mirror as we shift our focus to a future bombarded with distractions and disruptions. To help steer our course, we’ll continue honing the superpower of “responsible listening” in 2026. As responsible business educators and researchers, we embrace diversity and a kaleidoscope of perspectives, but many voices risk being drowned out in a world full of shouting and confusion. We must counter that and ensure all views are heard, so we can agree on the gems that will take us forward as a society and a species.

In 2026, we will train our attention on listening to – really hearing – the three core communities that make GIBS what it is: our students, alums, and our corporate partners. We need to hear about these key communities’ pains, needs, and aspirations by humbly entering that conversation as committed partners in the service of addressing challenges and enabling dreams. We commit to being responsive to these key stakeholders in our efforts to honour our partners in responsible listening. Most importantly, we need to move beyond talk to considered and consistent action.

As we step into 2026, we do so neither timorously nor arrogantly but as confident educators, researchers, think-partners, and collaborators. We will continue to take our vital role as collaborative nurturers seriously – providing the sustenance, space, and light to help green shoots grow and ideas flourish. We will keep leveraging our privileged position as an influential voice in society, specifically among the communities we serve. This is why I’m asking our students, alumni, and stakeholders to dream with us. Together, we can enhance our business school’s ability to be more attuned, responsive, and relevant through our commitment to responsible listening. [GIBS](#)

Celebrating Values

The following demonstrates ways in which our institution celebrates values in various specializations.

GIBS Works on Its Core Values

GIBS took the opportunity in 2025 to reconnect with its values. This culminated in a half-day, in-person gathering on campus that consisted of a panel and group dialogues, during which staff and faculty were encouraged to talk frankly and openly about the GIBS culture, the school's values, and how best to keep the GIBS magic alive.

As GIBS Dean Prof. Morris Mthombeni told the room, "This is a chance to connect and to re-negotiate who we are, and who we want to be. It's an opportunity for us to really stretch ourselves and make sure that when we talk about GIBS magic, it's something that we all agree is important, and we know what it means and how it drives us."

Setting the scene, Lerato Mahlasela, the executive director for human capital and development at GIBS, explained that "a few years ago, our executive committee asked the management committee to do some work to review our values to see if they needed refreshing or clarification". They set about doing just that, and the end result was a clearer, more refined, and refreshed set of core GIBS values that were fit for purpose today and relevant for the future.

The new-look GIBS values are:

1. **Go the extra mile:** We are willing to always do what is necessary to exceed expectations and display our commitment to excellence.
2. **Keep an open mind:** We value and encourage diverse perspectives. We are curious and experiment to find novel ways to solve problems and embrace change.
3. **Lend a helping hand:** We believe in teamwork and collaboration. We support each other with empathy and compassion.
4. **Do the right thing:** We are committed to integrity, honesty, and fairness. We show respect for others and make decisions that are in the best interest of the greater good.

While this all looked great on paper, the true impact of strong values lies in their ability to unite, inspire, and direct day-to-day actions and ways of being. As Mahlasela noted, "They help guide behaviours and decision-making, they help us shape our organisation's identity so we can make the right decisions in challenging moments."

In practical terms, this would require fostering behaviours that embedded a quality mindset across the entire business school.

Quality in the spotlight

Drawing on a 2025 [paper](#) by Jason Martin, Mattias Elg and Ida Gremyr, Mahlasela stressed that quality must always be considered in context. At GIBS, this meant delivering more than student and corporate customer value; it necessitated an organisation-wide commitment to delivering quality, not just based on agreed standards but by taking into account the broader impact on communities, stakeholders, and the impact on the African continent as a whole.

The conceptual meanings of quality

Bringing Martin, Elg and Gremyr's four-quadrant "quality-in-use" model to life for GIBS was a specific focus of the panel discussion and dialogues, which provided a valuable opportunity to explore what quality looks like at GIBS, how it was experienced, and the impact it should be having. By harvesting ideas and insights from across GIBS, the intention was to breathe life into the four values, ensuring that they did not just live inside a dusty document on the Dean's desk, but were a vibrant extension of the school's day-to-day operations.

Breathing life into our values

To maintain the momentum and the long-term focus on the four values, it was decided to revisit – in depth – one of the four GIBS values each year. This way, the conversation would continue, remaining fresh and relevant in the minds of staff and faculty.

For 2025, the "Go the extra mile" value was singled out. This meant that over the year, Gibsonites would actively celebrate staff and faculty who showed "gold-star quality and who are showing up and going the extra mile", explained Mahlasela. This would be supported within teams by creating mutually supportive spaces where teams could innovate and explore new ideas – sometimes getting it right and sometimes getting it wrong, but always in a safe space.

Through a formalised competition and judging process – which included financial prizes for winning teams – Gibsonites would be encouraged to showcase their initiatives and ideas. Finally, GIBS undertook to share learnings and reflections from their value-driven journey with stakeholders.

To get to this point, though, required a common understanding, fresh perspectives, ideas, and input. This is where the panel discussion and dialogue portions of the workshop came into their own.

Quality panel discussion: What does excellence look like?

During an illuminating panel discussion, moderated by Prof. Mthombeni, Gibsonites were exposed to real-world examples of quality service and delivery in action, to help set the scene for inward deliberation.

The intention behind the session was to inspire participants to rethink how quality was perceived through the eyes of GIBS's clients and stakeholders. By inviting external voices into the conversation, the panel challenged assumptions, shared practical insights, and broadened perspectives on what quality at GIBS should look like in practice.

Businessman and restaurateur Gary Kyriacou, co-founder of the Marble Hospitality Group, and Mokgadi Manamela, managing executive for safety, health, environment and quality at the Gautrain Management Agency, shared a wealth of insights and experiences. Just two key take-home moments from this session were:

"A big-picture mindset is essential. We're not only moving passengers, we're shaping how future generations trust and experience public transport in South Africa."

Mokgadi Manamela – reflecting on the mindset required to deliver quality

"We need values, not rules. If your people live the values at the back end, it will flow through to every guest experience. We have to perform every day, every night – that's what we try to do."

Gary Kyriacou – reflecting on how values drive customer experiences in the restaurant industry

Let's talk: Group dialogues

Moderating this portion of the workshop was Vuyokazi Majola, senior manager for learning and development at GIBS. The intention was to create something new out of a process of listening, letting go of closely held views, respecting the opinions of others, and sharing ideas in a way that invited discussion and participation.

The group dialogues, which were jointly facilitated by other members of the Learning and Development team, as well as the NextGen board, sought to explore:

- Fresh perspectives on how quality is defined and delivered in different industries.
- The risks and impact of overlooking quality, especially on trust and reputation.
- Assumptions that may be limiting transformational client and student experiences.
- Steps toward building a shared, practical definition of quality at GIBS, and ensuring it is lived consistently.

With GIBS's values and the quality of the business school's offering at the centre of the dialogue, topics raised during this portion of the reconnection process were varied and, at times, critical.

Among the key themes to emerge included a call for all Gibsonites to take accountability and ownership. This meant paying attention and caring not only about an individual business unit or service, but to the entire GIBS ecosystem. It centred on a willingness to step in and actively make a difference when required. As one participant observed, this required pitching up each and every day and delivering a quality service, so standards remained consistently high.

Another strong point was a plea to listen to feedback without taking observations personally. Take criticism on board, was one comment. Use it as an opportunity to improve, was another.

Super summary: Embedding quality at GIBS

In their final reflections, which rounded off the Reconnecting to our Values workshop, Gibsonites shared their views on how each and every member of GIBS could contribute to an inspired culture of learning, where staff were engaged, students were thriving, and corporate clients got value for money.

Suggestions ranged from calls for a customer-centricity workshop to embracing the lessons that come from failure, as well as supporting one another.

Designing a roadmap: Pathway to embedding quality

The insights that emerged from the sessions were more than just feedback. They were incorporated into the foundation of a practical roadmap for embedding quality at GIBS.

The roadmap that emerged was:

- **Define quality at GIBS:** Create a shared definition of what quality means for the school.
- **Set quality standards:** Develop practical, measurable standards that guide behaviours and decisions.
- **Integrate into practice:** Embed the standards into onboarding, performance discussions, recognition coaching, and daily work.
- **Keep the conversation alive:** Use further dialogues and management forums to sustain learning.
- **Measure and improve:** Track progress through surveys and feedback, celebrate success, and refine as needed.



GIBS staff discussing values, 2025

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- After 25 years of impact, GIBS decided to revisit and reconnect with the values that turned an upstart South African business school into a triple-accredited, top-ranked global institution and the best executive education offering in South Africa.
- Four core values underpin the GIBS culture.
- These values are critical to delivering quality “GIBS magic” day in and day out.
- The question is: how can GIBS embed these values across its practices, systems, and tools?

Nelson Mandela Day 2025: A Commitment to Service and Social Impact

In July 2025, GIBS reaffirmed its commitment to responsible leadership, social responsibility, and community engagement through its Nelson Mandela Day initiatives, aligned with the national theme, *“It’s still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity.”* Staff participated in a series of service-oriented activities designed to contribute meaningfully to local communities while reinforcing the School’s values of empathy, active citizenship, and societal impact.

The day commenced with a candle-lighting ceremony on campus to commemorate Nelson Mandela’s legacy and encourage reflection on the role that individuals and institutions can play in addressing social challenges. Staff then participated in community outreach projects at two partner sites: the Emseni Community Project in Roodepoort and Kaalfontein Secondary School in Midrand. Activities

included painting classrooms and community spaces, supporting educational facilities, participating in learner-focused demonstrations and engagements, and contributing to broader community upliftment efforts.

To extend the impact of Mandela Day beyond a single day of service, GIBS also launched a sanitary pad and menstrual hygiene products collection drive in support of Kaalfontein Secondary School. The initiative remained active after Mandela Day and encouraged sustained staff participation throughout the year. By addressing a practical barrier to educational access and learner wellbeing, the campaign demonstrated GIBS' commitment to dignity, inclusion, and educational opportunity, while fostering a culture of ongoing social responsibility among staff.

Collectively, these initiatives provided opportunities for staff to translate the School's values into action, strengthening relationships with local communities and reinforcing GIBS' role as a socially responsible institution committed to contributing positively to society.



Celebrating Mandela Day 2025

Continue telling your story

Values in Action: Accountability to Society and the Planet

Values in action

The following two examples show how GIBS connects its values to practical work in business, education and society.

1. Business integrity and anti-corruption leadership

GIBS extended its Values commitment beyond its own campus in 2025 through public thought leadership on business integrity. The October 2025 policy brief *Future-proofing South African business against corruption*, authored by Colette Ashton and Erin Klazar and carrying both the

Institute for Security Studies and GIBS identities, argues that business should play a leadership role in reducing corruption because integrity is both an ethical obligation and a long-term commercial interest.

The brief identifies two practical approaches: anti-corruption collective action across sectors and anti-corruption compliance programmes within organisations. It calls for collaboration among business, government, civil society and academia, recommends stronger use of compliance programmes across companies and supply chains, and highlights GIBS' Anti-Corruption Working Guide for South African Companies as a practical resource.

Through this work—research, convening and education—GIBS uses its capabilities to support a wider culture of accountability and strengthen the ethical infrastructure of business and society. The evidence is relevant to the Values principle because it connects integrity to a practical mechanism and to outward-facing public engagement.



2. Environmental accountability through climate and nature education

Business Strategies for Nature and Biodiversity is an elective introduced in 2025, compulsory for the MBA specialisation **Climate Leadership and Sustainability** and available to all Masters students.

Businesses have a choice: remain reactive to escalating environmental crises or lead the transformation to a resilient, nature-positive economy. This course connects biodiversity, climate responsibility and business strategy so that learners can develop practical responses for their organisations and sectors.

This course is structured over three intensive days:

Day 1: Deep dive into the interdependencies between business, climate and nature, together with an assessment of the climate and biodiversity challenges faced by industries.

Day 2: Explore nature-based solutions to strengthen business resilience, enhance climate adaptation and unlock opportunities for a nature-positive future.

Day 3: Develop a strategic plan that integrates biodiversity into business decision-making. Participants collaborate in syndicates to present industry-specific frameworks and pathways to actionable impact.

Course faculty: Tanya dos Santos Ford; Jill Bogie.





Teach

We transform our learning environments by integrating responsible management concepts and practices into our curriculum and pedagogy.



How We Define Teach

At GIBS, teach means embedding responsible management, climate leadership and sustainability throughout curricula and pedagogy. We equip students and executives with the knowledge, skills, values and critical judgement to lead ethically, innovate responsibly and address Africa's interconnected social, economic and environmental challenges in practice.

Courses that support RME

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) reports 6 courses in 2025 that support responsible management education and sustainable development goals.

Effective Decision Making in New Economies: A Core Course of MPhil LNE | GIG 824

Effective Decision Making in New Economies develops students' capacity to make responsible, ethical and adaptive decisions in environments characterised by complexity, disruption and large-scale transformational change. The course moves from individual decision-making to organisational adaptation and culminates in an Integrative Action Learning Project (IALP). Students examine bounded rationality, cognitive bias, ethical decision-making and influence before exploring how organisations adapt their strategy, culture, leadership, business models, systems and technology in response to major environmental shifts.

The course emphasises the practical application of theory. Students identify a significant transformational shift affecting their organisation, map the broader system and its stakeholders, identify a creative organisational challenge and develop a response that is tested and refined through stakeholder engagement and structured reflection. This approach strengthens students' ability to develop actionable, responsible and ethically informed responses to complex organisational and societal challenges.

The course develops students as more reflective, ethically aware and adaptive decision-makers capable of responding to complex challenges that cannot be addressed through conventional linear decision-making alone.

Students learn to recognise how cognitive biases and bounded rationality can influence judgement, interrogate the ethical implications of their decisions and improve their effectiveness when decisions involve multiple stakeholders. The course then extends this learning to organisational settings, requiring students to consider how strategy, culture, leadership, business models, systems and technology need to adapt in response to large-scale environmental shifts.

A particularly important impact mechanism is the Integrative Action Learning Project. Students must

investigate a real organisational challenge, construct a systems map, analyse stakeholder interests, identify their own biases and ethical considerations and engage directly with representatives of stakeholder groups before refining their proposed solution.

This moves learning beyond theoretical understanding toward responsible action. Through iterative action, stakeholder feedback and reflection, students develop their ability to question assumptions, appreciate different worldviews, collaborate across stakeholder boundaries and create solutions that are both strategically viable and attentive to their wider organisational and societal consequences.



Purpose and Business Strategy: A Core Course of MPhil LNE | GIG 821

Purpose and Business Strategy introduces students to large-scale transformational shifts and equips them with sensing and sense-making approaches for interpreting their implications for organisations. Taking a stakeholder-centric view of the firm, students explore how major shifts associated with technology, trade, inequality and climate change interact with organisational purpose and business strategy. The course ultimately challenges students to consider how businesses can move beyond narrow shareholder primacy toward purpose-driven approaches that recognise the interests and influence of multiple stakeholders.

Through a sequence of applied workshops, students use tools including mapping, economic frameworks, business model analysis and stakeholder perspectives to interrogate complex contemporary challenges and translate theoretical learning into strategic organisational responses.

The course develops students' ability to recognise, interpret and respond responsibly to major systemic changes affecting business and society.

Rather than treating strategy as an isolated organisational activity, students learn to examine how businesses interact with broader economic, technological, social and ecological systems. They use sensing and sense-making tools to interpret complexity and consider how different stakeholders experience transformational change.

The sustainability component is particularly strong. Students examine climate change as a non-linear

systemic shift and use Doughnut Economics to analyse the social foundations and ecological ceilings affected by an African business. They are explicitly required to consider stakeholder perspectives, contradictions and opportunities for organisational transformation.

Students also critically examine AI and organisational transformation, considering who benefits, who may be displaced, the leadership and cultural changes required, and how organisations can integrate AI responsibly and sustainably.

The course culminates in consideration of the transition from shareholder primacy to stakeholder capitalism, asking students to critically examine the consequences of balancing profitability with wider stakeholder interests.



Environment of Business: A Core Course of MPhil LNE | GIG 822

Environment of Business develops the capacity to understand and respond to systemic sustainability challenges by applying systems thinking, complexity and strategic foresight. Students are encouraged to adopt broader, deeper and longer-term perspectives when interpreting organisational challenges and opportunities.

The course applies these perspectives to the organisation's relationship with the natural environment, sustainability and climate challenges, supply-chain responsibility and the circular economy. It extends this systemic perspective into the relational dimension of responsible management by exploring inter-organisational relationships and practical approaches for developing high-impact, multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The course shifts students from viewing sustainability as an isolated corporate initiative toward understanding it as a systemic strategic challenge involving interconnected environmental, social, economic and stakeholder relationships.

Students apply circular-economy principles to actual manufacturing processes and assess opportunities to redesign systems around renewable resources, reuse, recycling and remanufacturing. They must support their recommendations with multiple credible sources rather than relying on

unsupported assumptions.

Strategic foresight then develops students' ability to challenge assumptions about the future and identify emerging opportunity spaces rather than simply extrapolating existing trends.

The course also directly examines climate resilience and anticipatory governance, requiring students to consider how organisations relate to the natural environment and what capabilities they need to participate in transformational change.

Importantly for responsible management education, students interrogate organisational claims concerning social impact, climate and environmental performance and responsible supply chains, comparing corporate claims with independent evidence.

The final dimension moves students from diagnosis toward collaboration. They identify sustainability challenges, map stakeholder interests, influence and resources, and develop approaches for creating collaborative value through cross-sector partnerships.



Harnessing the New Economies: A Core Course of MPhil LNE | GIG 823

Harnessing the New Economies introduces students to the systems logic and underlying mechanisms of emerging and new economies and critically examines their implications for organisations, societies and governance.

The course develops students' capacity to understand digital, circular, green and social economies as interconnected system-level transitions, while building the collaborative competencies required to engage ethically with diverse stakeholders in complex and conflictual environments. Its central purpose is to enable students to co-create innovative responses that strengthen resilience, inclusivity and sustainability.

This course deliberately takes responsible management education outside the classroom.

Students first learn to understand new economies as interconnected systems rather than isolated

economic trends. Digital, circular, green and social economies are presented as related system-level transitions requiring systems-change capabilities.

They then explore the difficult human dimension of systems change: identifying stakeholder perspectives, interests and power asymmetries, and learning practical approaches for collaborating in contested or low-trust environments.

The strongest pedagogical element is the experiential learning journey. Students enter a real-world setting affected by a problematic situation and engage directly with stakeholders in order to understand lived experiences and systemic challenges.

Afterwards, students reflect collectively on what they encountered. They are required to identify contradictions and blind spots, connect lived stakeholder experience to systems models and consider how effectively they respected and integrated conflicting stakeholder perspectives.

Students subsequently create a systems map illustrating interconnections, feedback loops and systemic drivers, and critically reflect on how their syndicates engaged with diverse perspectives and managed conflict.

This makes the course a strong demonstration of PRME's aim of developing managers who can engage meaningfully with stakeholders and contribute to sustainable and inclusive change.



Applied Business Project: A Core Course of the PGDip | GIA 751

The Applied Business Project is a syndicate-based course that runs throughout the PGDip in Business Administration and carries 20 credits. Students investigate a societal or environmental challenge in South Africa linked to a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, excluding health-related topics. Through ethical research, stakeholder engagement and the application of theories and tools from at least six core subjects, students develop and test a feasible, financially viable solution. The course integrates business knowledge, evidence-based decision-making, collaborative problem-solving and effective communication, culminating in a written report and presentation.

The Applied Business Project helps students connect business knowledge with societal and environmental challenges in South Africa. By investigating an SDG-related issue, engaging stakeholders and developing a financially viable solution, students strengthen their research, critical thinking and evidence-based decision-making skills. Syndicate work develops collaboration and communication, while integrating learning across business disciplines encourages students to consider the wider consequences of business decisions. The course prepares students to propose practical solutions that combine business viability with social and environmental value.



Integrated Business Simulation: A Core Course of the MBA

| Integrated Business Simulation 852

The GIBS Integrated Business Simulation (IBS) is a capstone MBA course that provides students with an immersive, experiential learning opportunity through the Capstone 2.0® business simulation. Acting as executive leaders of a publicly traded company, students integrate knowledge from across strategy, finance, marketing, operations, human resources and leadership to make decisions in a dynamic and competitive business environment.

A key focus of the course is responsible management and sustainability. Students are required to balance financial performance with ethical leadership, stakeholder considerations and long-term organisational success. Through the simulation, they develop the ability to make responsible decisions, evaluate sustainability implications and understand how organisations can achieve profitability while creating positive social and environmental outcomes.

The course culminates in a realistic business experience that challenges students to apply systems thinking, strategic leadership and sustainable business principles in pursuit of competitive and responsible organisational performance.

The GIBS Integrated Business Simulation equips students to become responsible leaders who understand that sustainable business success requires balancing economic, social and environmental priorities. By managing a simulated organisation, students experience the complexities of real-world decision-making and learn to evaluate the consequences of their actions across multiple stakeholder groups.

The course strengthens students' ability to think strategically, act ethically and make evidence-based decisions in uncertain environments. Through the integration of sustainability into strategic and operational choices, students develop a practical understanding of how responsible management contributes to long-term organisational performance and societal value creation.

A distinctive feature of the course is its Triple Bottom Line approach, which evaluates performance across People, Profit and Planet dimensions. Students are challenged to improve not only financial outcomes, but also employee wellbeing, customer satisfaction, community impact and environmental performance. This experience develops leaders who are better prepared to drive sustainable growth, address complex challenges and create meaningful value for business and society.



Teaching Awards

In 2025, 1 award was given to faculty and educators at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS).

2025 Social Impact Leader of the Year – Future of Leadership Awards

Granter: The Future Leader Forum – Future of Leadership Awards

Grantee: Dr Steven Zwane – Senior Lecturer, GIBS Business School, University of Pretoria

Award Description:

In 2025, Dr Steven Zwane, a member of the GIBS faculty, was named Social Impact Leader of the Year at the Future of Leadership Awards, recognising leadership that contributes meaningfully to society and advances inclusive and responsible development.

The Social Impact Leader of the Year category specifically honours leadership that “uplifts communities, addresses inequality, and champions human dignity.” Dr Zwane was selected as the winner following the Future Leader Forum's nomination and voting process. The wider 2025 awards attracted 23,412 votes across ten leadership categories and sought to recognise transformational, values-led leaders contributing to a better future.

The recognition aligns strongly with GIBS's commitment to responsible leadership and positive societal impact. Dr Zwane's academic and practitioner work connects entrepreneurship education, youth development, inclusive economic participation and community impact. In addition to his teaching at GIBS, he founded the Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development initiative and has worked extensively in corporate citizenship and entrepreneurship development. Independent 2025 coverage describes his work as spanning social impact, youth employability, entrepreneurship and values-based leadership.

The award therefore provides evidence of how members of the GIBS community extend responsible management principles beyond the classroom, translating expertise and leadership into practices that address inequality, strengthen communities and expand economic opportunity.

Educator Recognition

At Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), we recognize educators for quality of teaching in the following ways:

- ❖ Annual teaching excellence awards
- ❖ Faculty promotion and tenure consideration
- ❖ Publication or research support
- ❖ Student-nominated teaching awards
- ❖ Course evaluation scores

Teaching Voices

The following statement demonstrates ways in which educators at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) support sustainability and responsible management in their classrooms.

Embedding Sustainability and Ethics Across the Learning Journey for MBA students

INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

Embedding sustainability and ethics across the learning journey

Prof. Manoj Chiba and Prof. Hayley Pearson describe a curriculum in which responsible decision-making is core, connected and applied.



An extract from Mhlanga, D. (2025, May 15), "Embracing sustainability and responsible business practices," *Acumen*, Issue 50, pp. 48–50, presents sustainability and ethics as essential capabilities for future leaders.

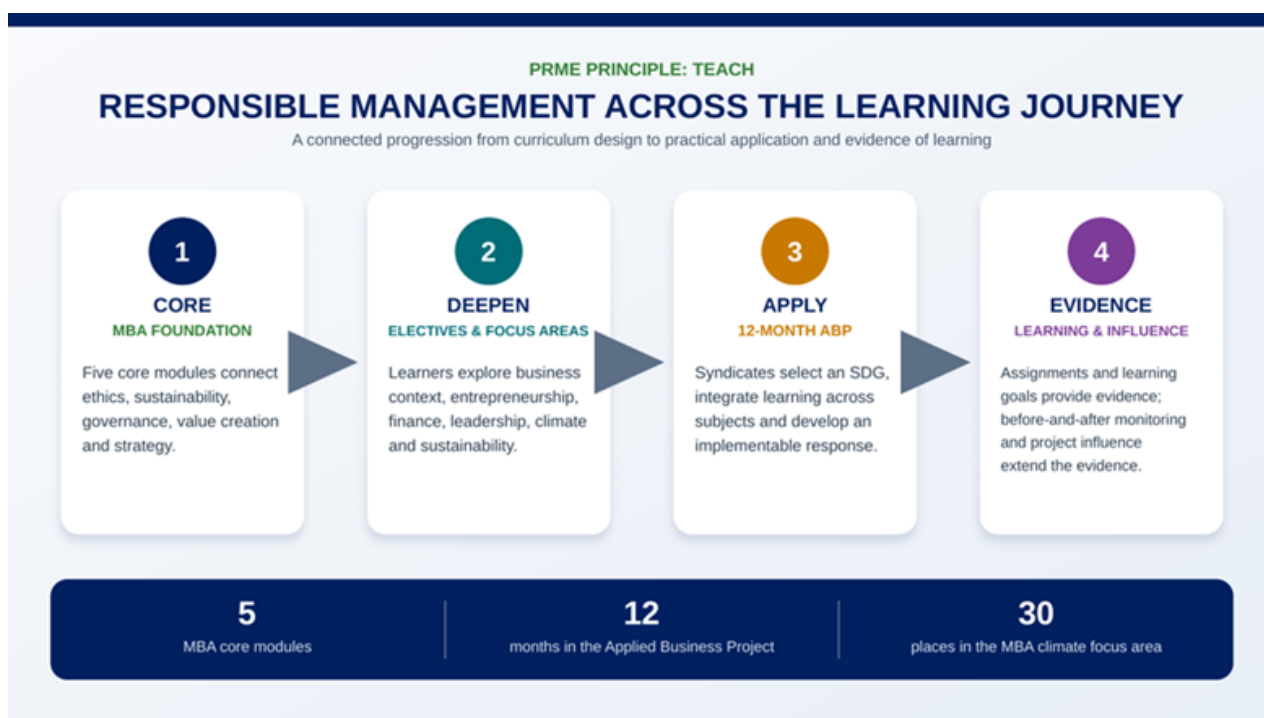
The cited May 2025 *Acumen* article documents how GIBS integrates sustainability and ethics into academic education. The approach begins from a clear premise: leaders must be able to navigate climate change, resource constraints and social inequality while still making resilient, ethical and strategically sound decisions.

At GIBS, responsible management is not confined to a stand-alone elective. It recurs across the learning journey—operationally and strategically, and at individual, organisational, national and continental levels. This design enables learners to connect values and governance with innovation, finance, supply chains, entrepreneurship and leadership practice.

A connected teaching architecture

The MBA provides the core architecture. Leadership, Business Environment, Innovation and Design, Decision Making, and Strategic Implementation each create opportunities to examine ethics, sustainability, governance, value creation and strategy. Electives and focus areas then deepen this foundation through specific organisational and functional lenses.

Applied integration occurs through the 12-month Applied Business Project (ABP), completed by academic education students alongside their core studies. Working in syndicates, students select a UN Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG), combine methodologies and insights from different subjects, and develop a practical response to the selected challenge.



Responsible management moves from core curriculum to thematic depth, applied integration and evidence of learning.

The progression matters: students first encounter responsible management as part of business decision-making, then revisit it from different functional perspectives, before combining those perspectives in collaborative, applied work. Sustainability therefore becomes a leadership and decision-making discipline rather than an isolated topic.

Teaching approach and educator voices



Prof. Manoj Chiba, MBA Director and Associate Professor.

Prof. Manoj Chiba — Sustainability-focused education develops responsible leaders who understand the long-term consequences of their actions and can balance environmental stewardship, social well-being and economic fairness. The emphasis is pragmatic: learners receive frameworks and tools, but are also expected to use them to develop academically sound, implementable responses.



Prof. Hayley Pearson, Executive Director: Academic Education.

Prof. Hayley Pearson – The institutional teaching model draws on sustainability specialists, guest speakers, external partners, the UN SDGs, the GIBS ethics think tank and wider University of Pretoria expertise. These perspectives enrich classroom learning and connect academic content with contemporary organisational and societal challenges.

How MBA students engage

- **Business in context:** MBA students analyse ethics, governance, employee well-being, risk and sustainable supply chains as interdependent organisational concerns, using cases and applied discussion.
- **Entrepreneurship:** students examine green ventures, impact investing, social entrepreneurship and women in entrepreneurship as routes to sustainable and inclusive value creation.
- **Finance:** students connect sustainable finance, emerging technology, strategic finance and value creation to purpose and capital-allocation decisions.
- **Leadership:** students apply ethics, diversity, corruption, contextual intelligence and strategic decision-making to accountable leadership practice.

Students seeking further depth can pursue the MBA Climate Leadership and Sustainability focus area, which the 2025 evidence describes as an offering limited to 30 participants.

Resulting value and evidence of learning

The value of the design lies in coherence and repetition. Learners interpret sustainability through different disciplines, practise ethical judgement in varied contexts and then integrate these perspectives in applied work. The ABP makes that integration tangible by requiring teams to frame a UN SDG-related challenge and translate their learning into a practical response.

Learning is evidenced through assignments, assessment and achievement of learning goals. The wider evaluation approach also includes monitoring student progress before and after learning interventions where relevant, together with consideration of the real-world influence of applied projects. This creates a line of sight from curriculum intent to learner capability and practical contribution.

The 2025 evidence records responsible-management themes across five MBA core modules, a 12-month ABP and a 30-place climate focus area. Together, these elements demonstrate breadth, depth and application across the learning journey.

An extract from Mhlanga, D. (2025, May 15). Embracing sustainability and responsible business practices. *Acumen*, Issue 50, pp. 48–50. [Read the article](#).

Barriers to Innovative Curriculum

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) identified the following barrier to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing curriculum:

- ❖ Institutional and Regulatory procedures take time

Barriers to Innovative Pedagogy

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) identified the following barriers to innovating, updating, or taking risks in existing pedagogy:

- ❖ Time constraints
- ❖ Resource constraints
- ❖ Technology gaps

Continue telling your story

Growing Women, Enterprises and Rural Resilience

Learning designed around rural realities

The programme moved beyond classroom assumptions to practical learning in agriculture, finance, marketing and enterprise development.

For many women in Limpopo, subsistence farming is both a way of life and a vital source of household income. In 2024, Corteva Agriscience partnered with the GIBS Entrepreneurship Development Academy to extend #SoilSistas into a rural pilot in Moletji Village and later Makgoba Village. The 2025 phase continued the practical interventions and culminated in a certificate ceremony at the end of the year.

The programme began with an important act of listening.

Participants often did not own formally registered farms, some were not connected to banking services, and many faced water constraints and limited access to finance or markets. Their learning needs included soil types, crop selection, fertilisation, pest management, basic marketing and financial planning. The design therefore shifted away from a theory-heavy model created for commercial farmers and towards hands-on, needs-based learning that could be applied immediately.

2025 EVIDENCE SNAPSHOT | LEARNING DESIGNED AROUND LIVED REALITIES



2025 evidence snapshot: reach across direct learning, enterprise support and community radio.



A practical #SoilSistas learning session in Limpopo. Image supplied with the Acumen feature.

From household food production to enterprise thinking

Given Mothata entered the programme growing vegetables to help feed her family and reduce household expenses. The training helped her recognise that the land available to her could also support a small business. She began costing seeds and other inputs and reframed sustainability as disciplined financial management, not profit alone.

“The #SoilSistas training taught me that success isn’t just profit, it’s about managing finances and sustaining a business.”— Given Mothata, Moletji farmer

Knowledge that travels through community

The rural pilot did more than transfer technical knowledge. Three #SoilSistas alumni were developed as convenors who could mentor other agri-entrepreneurs and support peer learning across Limpopo. In Makgoba, this locally led model informed a tailored programme for 10 subsistence agri-entrepreneurs. Four Sepedi learning segments on Moletji Community Radio also extended financial, agricultural and entrepreneurial learning beyond the 73 women enrolled. The pedagogy was adapted to language, place and access conditions rather than requiring rural learners to adapt to an urban classroom model.



From ESG Knowledge to Client-Facing Action

From ESG Knowledge to Client-Facing Action

The GIBS–Standard Bank Group (SBG) ESG & Sustainability Advanced Development Programme converts sustainability insight into relevant and practical application at a strategic level.



The programme is presented in Acumen as a GIBS–Standard Bank Group (SBG) partnership for future-ready leadership. Source: an extract from du Plessis, W. (2025), “Strategic Sustainability,” Acumen, published 26 June 2025.



Published in June 2025, the Acumen story “Strategic Sustainability” records a learning partnership designed for a sector in which climate and ESG considerations increasingly shape strategy, operating models, financing decisions and client expectations. Standard Bank Group (SBG) and GIBS use executive education to build a common sustainability language while strengthening leaders’ ability to recognise opportunity and support clients through transition.

The programme began in 2023 and had completed four cohorts by the 2025 publication. It was initially aimed at Corporate and Investment Banking and later expanded to senior employees across Standard Bank Group (SBG)’s African and global operations. GIBS provides the Africa-centred learning partnership and supports relevant and practical application of sustainability knowledge at a strategic level.

THE LEARNING JOURNEY

From purpose to client-facing action



Programme architecture and final assessment design, as reported in the cited Acumen extract.

A Shared Curriculum for Sustainable Growth

EDUCATOR AND PARTNERSHIP VOICES

A shared curriculum for sustainable growth



Educator photographs: Acumen / Contact Media, 2025.



Tanya dos Santos Ford

As GIBS faculty member and 2025 course convenor, her teaching focus is to equip client-facing leaders to ask better sustainability questions, recognise opportunities and bring informed expertise into client conversations.

Dr Jill Bogie

As Director of GIBS Sustainability Initiatives for Africa, she positions partnership as central to a curriculum that addresses current challenges, anticipates future trends and enables real-world application.

FROM LEARNING TO IMPACT *From ESG fluency to applied practice*



Why this matters for responsible management education

The programme demonstrates how responsible management education can extend beyond formal degree curricula into the organisations GIBS serves. Sustainability is connected to purpose, strategy, financing decisions, innovation and the responsibilities leaders have toward clients and society.

Its assessment design reinforces practical transfer. Teams must turn concepts into project ideas and defend them before a panel, while the partnership keeps the curriculum connected to African market realities and evolving global practice.

Teaching becomes the bridge between sustainability knowledge and decisions taken in the market.

2025 EVIDENCE An extract from du Plessis, W. (2025), "Strategic Sustainability," Acumen, published 26 June 2025. Published evidence confirms four completed cohorts, expansion across senior employees in Africa and globally, applied learning and panel-based final assessment. [Read the article](#)

Developing Responsible African Leadership Through Global Partnership

The GIBS–Harvard Senior Executive Program–Africa (SEPA), 2025

SEPA 2025 | EVIDENCE SNAPSHOT



ETHICAL LEADERSHIP • CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY • PURPOSE & PROFIT
RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION • GOVERNANCE

Evidence: 2025 Abidjan delivery and programme structure (Fondation Kaydan, GIBS programme calendar, HBS Executive Education).

2025 evidence snapshot: reach, learning structure and responsible-management themes.

Responsible leadership embedded in executive education

In 2025, GIBS continued its collaboration with Harvard Business School Executive Education through the Senior Executive Program–Africa (SEPA), creating a learning environment in which senior African decision-makers engage with the strategic, ethical and governance challenges shaping business on the continent. Responsible management is integrated into the wider executive-development journey through leadership, accountability, purpose, resilience, innovation and sustainable organisational performance.

The 2025 programme was delivered through three connected learning stages: an in-person African module from 25–30 May, independent and virtual learning from 2 June–15 August, and a concluding module at Harvard Business School in Boston from 17–22 August. The African module was hosted in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, marking the programme's first delivery in Francophone Africa. Fondation Kaydan reported that the Abidjan module brought together 70 senior executives and entrepreneurs from 19 African countries, creating a cross-country learning community of leaders operating in diverse institutional, economic and social contexts.

The curriculum makes the responsible-leadership dimension explicit. Module 1 includes Strategic Leadership in Africa: In Search of Ethical Leadership, while later learning addresses Leadership and Corporate Accountability, including responsibilities to investors, employees, customers and society. The programme also engages participants with Striving for Purpose and Profit, linking organisational performance with questions of purpose, stakeholder responsibility and long-term value creation.

Responsible leadership is reinforced through themes including governance, crisis leadership, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, fintech and data sovereignty. These topics expose senior leaders to the strategic opportunities created by technological and economic change while requiring them to consider accountability, governance and the wider consequences of executive decision-making.

SEPA 2025 | PUBLIC EVIDENCE

2025 DELIVERY

25-30 May

Africa module

2 Jun-15 Aug

Virtual / self-paced

17-22 Aug

HBS Campus, Boston

ABIDJAN 2025

70 senior executives & entrepreneurs

19 African countries represented

First SEPA delivery in
Francophone Africa

Sources: GIBS 2025 Programme Calendar; Fondation Kaydan, 30 May 2025.

2025 delivery evidence: programme dates and public reporting on the Abidjan cohort.

From learning to workplace action

A defining feature of SEPA is the Big Business Challenge Project. Across the programme, participants identify an important strategic or operational challenge within their organisation or region and develop an actionable response. The project is carried through the learning journey, with opportunities for feedback and refinement before participants develop a concept poster and present their proposed solution.

This applied design connects executive learning directly to organisational practice. Participants are expected to draw on programme concepts, test ideas against the realities of their own context and translate learning into decisions and recommendations that can be taken back into the workplace. In this way, ethical leadership, corporate accountability, innovation and purpose are connected to a concrete problem rather than remaining abstract classroom concepts.

RESPONSIBLE-MANAGEMENT LEARNING JOURNEY



Responsible management is embedded across the learning experience and connected to a real workplace challenge.

Responsible-management learning journey: from ethical leadership and accountability to an applied organisational response.

Global knowledge, African context

The GIBS–Harvard partnership brings together global executive-education capability and African contextual knowledge. Harvard Business School contributes international faculty, case-based learning and academic design, while GIBS supports the contextualisation of learning within African markets, institutions and leadership realities. The result is a learning environment in which international management knowledge is examined through the experience of executives working across the continent.

The 2025 Abidjan delivery broadened this regional dimension by extending SEPA into Francophone Africa. Executives from 19 African countries were able to learn alongside peers facing different market conditions, policy environments and organisational challenges. Cross-country discussion and peer exchange therefore became part of the learning method, strengthening the programme’s ability to surface African experience rather than treating the continent as a single business context.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP, AFRICAN CONTEXT



2025 public evidence: first Francophone Africa delivery in Abidjan; participants drawn from 19 African countries.

Partnership model: global faculty and academic design combined with African contextualisation, peer exchange and workplace application.

Building leaders for responsible growth

SEPA demonstrates how responsible management education can be embedded within the development of senior executives. Ethical leadership and corporate accountability sit alongside strategy, innovation and growth; participants work with real organisational challenges; and the learning experience combines global knowledge with African realities. The programme therefore develops not only executives capable of competing in dynamic markets, but leaders equipped to consider how organisations can grow, innovate and perform while remaining accountable to the people, institutions and societies they serve.

Sustainability Mindset Indicator: A new addition to the Standard Bank Group ESG and Sustainability Programme

From Awareness to Sustained Action: Developing Responsible Leaders through the Sustainability Mindset Indicator

GIBS recognises that effective sustainability leadership requires more than technical knowledge of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. Addressing complex societal and organisational challenges calls for leaders who are able to connect knowledge with values, reflection, and action. Through the work of the Personal and Applied Learning (PAL) Centre, GIBS seeks to develop this capability by integrating personal transformation and intentional application into leadership development.

A key example is the application of the Sustainability Mindset Indicator (SMI), a developmental assessment and learning framework designed to help participants understand their current sustainability mindset and identify opportunities for growth. Rather than treating sustainability as a stand-alone body of knowledge, the framework encourages participants to reflect on the assumptions, values, and behaviours that influence leadership practice and decision-making.

This approach was incorporated into the GIBS-Standard Bank ESG and Sustainability Advanced Development Programme, which aims to strengthen leaders' ability to navigate complex ESG challenges, engage in meaningful sustainability conversations, and identify opportunities for organisational and client impact. Within this context, the SMI introduced a reflective dimension to the learning journey, encouraging participants to consider how their understanding of sustainability aligns with their leadership behaviours and professional responsibilities.

The educational value of the initiative lies in its emphasis on moving from awareness to sustained action. Participants are encouraged to recognise that knowledge alone does not necessarily lead to responsible behaviour; meaningful change also requires reflection, personal commitment, and the exercise of individual agency. Through facilitated discussion and structured self-assessment, learners explore how responsible leadership can be expressed through everyday decisions, priorities, conversations, and organisational practices.



Analytical learning pathway prepared from the SMI's knowing-being-doing orientation and the supplied pilot evidence. It is a conceptual model, not a measured outcome claim.

The learning pathway demonstrates how participants move beyond acquiring ESG knowledge to examining the assumptions, beliefs, and values that shape their responses to sustainability challenges. Reflection acts as a bridge between understanding and action, encouraging leaders to identify opportunities to exercise agency in their teams, organisations, and broader spheres of influence. In this way, sustainability becomes not only something leaders understand, but something they actively practice.

A participant reflection captured this central insight:

"Awareness is not enough; it needs to be translated into sustained action."

This perspective reflects the broader GIBS philosophy of personal and applied learning, in which leadership development is understood as both an inward and outward journey. The inward dimension focuses on self-awareness, values, and mindset, while the outward dimension emphasises the practical application of these insights within professional and organisational contexts.

By integrating sustainability education with personal leadership development, GIBS provides learners with a structured pathway from understanding sustainability challenges to acting on them. The initiative demonstrates how responsible-management education can move beyond knowledge acquisition to cultivate the attitudes, behaviours, and agency required for sustainable leadership. Through the Sustainability Mindset Indicator, learners are encouraged to translate sustainability awareness into informed decisions, responsible actions, and lasting organisational impact.





Research

We study people, organizations, institutions, and the state of the world to inspire responsible management and education practice.

How We Define Research

At GIBS, research is rigorous, ethical and Africa-centred, addressing real-world challenges affecting business, society and the planet. Through faculty, students, research centres and partners, we generate and share evidence that strengthens teaching, informs policy and organisational decisions, and advances responsible management practice across Africa and beyond.

Research vs Research for RME/Sustainable Development



Research Funding

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) was awarded funding for research that is:



National



International

Socializing Research

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) contributed research findings to:

- ❖ Social media and digital outreach
- ❖ Public events and lectures

Research Projects

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) reported 1 research project that implemented responsible or sustainable activities.

Understanding What Makes Public–Private Partnerships Work: South Africa’s National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) and FUEL

Period Covering: April, 2024 - November, 2025

Department: Centre for Business Ethics

Understanding What Makes Public–Private Partnerships Work is a GIBS qualitative research project examining the factors that enabled the longstanding partnership between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and FUEL to support the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

The authors of this study are GIBS faculty members, Prof Kerrin Myres, Dr Vivienne Spooner, Professor Gloria Mbokota, Prof Michele Ruiters, and Dr Tracey Toefy.

The research combined a review of relevant academic literature with 62 stakeholder interviews involving national and provincial government representatives, FUEL, Yellowwoods and other stakeholders. Approximately 900 pages of secondary documentation were also analysed. Data collection commenced in April 2024, and the findings and conclusions were presented to key stakeholders for ratification in November 2025.

The study identified transferable lessons for effective cross-sector collaboration, including the importance of a collaborative mindset, responsible leadership, trust, co-created solutions, active relationship management, change management and appropriate exit planning. It also developed a conceptual model linking leadership with problem identification, relationship development, implementation and partnership processes.

The research contributes practice-oriented knowledge for business, government, funders and civil-society organisations seeking to develop effective partnerships addressing complex social challenges. The final white paper was produced in 2026; therefore, this entry reports only the research activities and report finalisation completed during the 2025 reporting period.



Research Awards

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) was awarded 1 research award for responsibility- and/or sustainability-related research.

 **2025 Emerald Literati Award – Outstanding Paper**

Granter: Emerald Publishing

Grantee: Professor Caren Scheepers and Dawid Booyse

Award Description:

Description of Award: Professor Caren Scheepers, a GIBS faculty member, and Dawid Booyse received the 2025 Emerald Literati Award for Outstanding Paper for their article, "Barriers to adopting automated organisational decision-making through the use of artificial intelligence," published in Management Research Review. The award recognises the paper's contribution to knowledge, research quality, influence and potential impact within and beyond academia.

Research Presentations Related to RME and/or Sustainability

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) gave 1 research presentation related to RME and/or sustainability.

Household adoption of solar panels in South Africa: Insights for quantity surveyors in sustainable energy planning

Authors: Miranda Baloyi - Department of Construction Economics, University of Pretoria, South Africa.
| Marianne Matthee - Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), University of Pretoria, South Africa

Date of publication: November, 2025

Presented at: 15th SACQSP International Research Conference 2025

Department: Economics

The paper examines household adoption of solar panels in South Africa and considers the implications for quantity surveyors involved in sustainable energy planning. It explores how household and socioeconomic considerations influence residential solar adoption and highlights the role that quantity surveyors can play in evaluating affordability, project feasibility, lifecycle costs and renewable-energy investment decisions. By connecting household energy choices with built-environment practice, the research contributes to more informed and sustainable planning within South Africa's transition to cleaner and more resilient energy systems.



Publications Related to RME and/or Sustainability

Leveraging Governance and Accountability for Advancing Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Dr Clement Oppong – Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa; and School of Business, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana

Date of publication: April, 2025

Department: Finance | Sustainability | Business Ethics and Sustainability | Corporate Governance

This study examines whether governance and accountability improve progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. It analyses the composite SDG Index and Worldwide Governance Indicators for 48 Sub-Saharan African countries from 2016 to 2020 using feasible generalised least squares and system-GMM estimation. The findings show that control of corruption, rule of law, political stability, and voice and accountability significantly influence SDG performance. Regulatory quality and government effectiveness did not demonstrate statistically significant relationships. The research highlights the importance of institutional reform and accountable governance in accelerating sustainable development.



Enhancing Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship Drive in Africa: Do Digital Technologies Matter?

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Professor Motshedisi Sina Mathibe – Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria | Dr Clement Oppong – Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa; School of Business, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana.

Date of publication: August, 2025

Department: Finance | Business Management and Entrepreneurship | Digital Transformation and Information Systems

This study investigates how digital technologies promote financial inclusion and entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa. It analyses longitudinal data from 30 countries covering 2016–2023, using pooled ordinary least squares regression and the generalised method of moments as a robustness check. The findings indicate that mobile banking, fintech platforms and other digital financial services

significantly improve access to finance and entrepreneurial success in underserved regions. The study recommends context-sensitive financial products, supportive regulation, customer-centred innovation and greater collaboration between financial institutions, technology providers and policymakers.



Work From Home Model: An Exploration Into the Experiences of Working Mothers in the Service Sector: The Case of Nigeria and South Africa | [DOI](#)

Authors: Chukwuemeka Echebiri – Inland School of Business and Social Science, University of Inland Norway, Norway | Motshedisi Mathibe – Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa | Chiaka Martin Echebiri – Department of Management, University of Niagara Falls, Canada | Ubochioma Udo S. Osuigwe – Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Date of publication: September, 2025

Department: Human Resource Management | Organisational Behaviour | Leadership and Gender Studies

This qualitative study examines how social expectations and maternal responsibilities shape working-from-home experiences among mothers in the service sectors of Nigeria and South Africa. Interviews with 15 mothers show that moving paid employment into the home often intensifies conflict between professional duties, childcare and household responsibilities. Gender-role expectations place a disproportionate burden on working mothers and can negatively affect their wellbeing. The study demonstrates that remote work does not automatically deliver flexibility or work-life balance and must be supported by gender-sensitive organisational practices and appropriate family and childcare support.



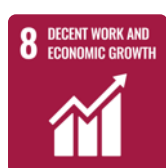
Social Enterprise Performance in South Africa: The Role of Strategic Planning and Networking Capability | [DOI](#)

Authors: Willie Chinyamurindi – Department of Business Management, University of Fort Hare, South Africa | Motshedisi Mathibe – Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa | Progress Hove-Sibanda – Department of Logistics, Faculty of Business and Economic Science, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

Date of publication: September, 2025

Department: Business Management and Entrepreneurship | Strategic Management

This study investigates how strategic planning and networking capability influence the performance of social enterprises in South Africa. Survey data were collected from 147 social-enterprise owners and managers and analysed using partial least squares structural-equation modelling. The results demonstrate positive relationships between strategic planning and performance, networking capability and performance, and strategic planning and networking capability. Networking capability also has a positive, although relatively weak, mediating role between strategic planning and social-enterprise performance. The research emphasises the importance of formal planning and productive stakeholder networks in resource-constrained environments.



Aligning Multiple Mandates and Mission Simultaneously: A Case of Small and Medium-Sized Social Enterprises in South Africa

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Emmanuel Simiyu Osembo — Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa | Kerrin Myres — Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa | Lauren Jankelowitz — Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Date of publication: March, 2025

Department: Business Management and Entrepreneurship | Strategic Management | Social Entrepreneurship

This study examines how small and medium-sized social enterprises in resource-constrained South African environments align multiple external mandates with their core social missions. It finds that social enterprises use community embeddedness, mission agility and proactive monitoring and evaluation to balance and pursue different opportunities without allowing external demands to displace their central purpose. The research introduces a framework showing how internal organisational practices and external engagement can facilitate innovative exploration while maintaining mission alignment. It contributes to understanding how social enterprises manage institutional complexity and avoid mission drift.



The Influence of Institutional Logics on Vaccine Development, Production and Distribution in Africa

| [DOI](#)

Authors: Richard Chawana — Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa
| Anastacia Mamabolo — Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa
| Evangelos Apostoleris — Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Date of publication: January, 2025

Department: Strategy | Operations and Supply Chain Management | Healthcare Management

This study investigates how institutional logics affect firms' participation in Africa's vaccine-development, production and distribution value chain. It uses a multiple-case-study design involving five vaccine-manufacturing firms across four African countries and interviews with 18 executives. The findings show that state, corporate and market logics influence different parts of the vaccine-manufacturing chain and coexist in configurations that shape organisational forms and behaviour. These configurations are also influenced by historical events, technological change and pandemics. The study develops a typology of vaccine-manufacturing firm archetypes and institutional-logic configurations.



Research Barriers

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) identified the following barriers to conducting research related to sustainability and/or responsibility:

- ❖ Funding challenges
- ❖ Publishing barriers
- ❖ Time constraints

Continue telling your story

Diana International Research Conference at GIBS: A Collaboration with Babson College

Diana International Research Conference: Building a Global Research Platform on Women's Entrepreneurship

In 2025, GIBS partnered with Babson College's Diana International Research Institute to prepare for the hosting of the Diana International Research Conference in Johannesburg in 2026. Through the launch of the conference call, public announcement of the event, and establishment of the organising and academic leadership structures, GIBS helped position Africa and the Global South at the centre of an important international research conversation on women's entrepreneurship and social innovation.



GIBS public conference poster for the 2026 Diana International Research Conference in Johannesburg.

The conference theme, *"Transforming Futures: Women and Social Entrepreneurship in a Digital Age"*, invited scholars to explore issues including digital transformation, artificial intelligence, inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems, access to finance, policy and governance, and context-specific theories of entrepreneurship. The call specifically encouraged research that advances understanding of women entrepreneurs and social ventures in under-represented contexts, creating opportunities for new knowledge generation and theory development relevant to emerging economies.

As host institution, GIBS contributed academic leadership, regional expertise, and network mobilisation, with GIBS faculty serving among the conference chairs and supporting engagement across local and international research communities. The partnership with the Diana International Research Institute connected GIBS to a globally recognised network of scholars dedicated to advancing research on women's entrepreneurship.

The initiative reflects GIBS' commitment to responsible management education by promoting research that addresses inclusion, equitable opportunity, and sustainable socio-economic development. The focus on women's entrepreneurship and social enterprise reinforces broader commitments to diversity, equity, and sustainable development while elevating scholarship from African and Global South contexts.

The conference, scheduled for 2026, was conceived as a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement, bringing together scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and doctoral researchers to explore entrepreneurship's role in addressing societal challenges. Through its planning and positioning activities in 2025, GIBS laid the foundation for future research collaboration, doctoral development, knowledge exchange, and policy-relevant insights on issues of global significance.



Partner

We engage people from business, government, civil society, and academia to advance responsible and accountable management education and practice.

How We Define Partner

At GIBS, Partner means building purposeful, reciprocal relationships with business, government, academia, civil society and international networks to advance responsible management. We co-create knowledge, convene diverse perspectives and translate shared expertise into ethical, social, environmental and developmental action across South Africa, Africa and beyond.

Institutional Partnerships

- ❖ AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
- ❖ AMBA (Association of MBAs)
- ❖ CEEMAN (Central and East European Management Development Association)
- ❖ Financial Times
- ❖ Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC)
- ❖ Positive Impact Rating (PIR)
- ❖ Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
- ❖ Responsible Research in Business & Management (RRBM)
- ❖ AABS (Association of African Business Schools)
- ❖ EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development)
- ❖ The National Business Initiative, South Africa
- ❖ Business Leadership South Africa
- ❖ Business Schools for Climate Leadership (BS4CL) Africa
- ❖ PRME Champions
- ❖ PRME Chapter Africa
- ❖ Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL)
- ❖ Fordham University
- ❖ Nottingham Business School
- ❖ Harvard Business School
- ❖ Ivey Publishing
- ❖ Diana International Research Institute, Babson College
- ❖ Times Higher Education (THE)
- ❖ Ministries of Education, Higher Education, or similar national bodies

Student Organization Partnerships

- ❖ Enactus
- ❖ SDSN Youth/SDG Student Program

Partnerships

The following provides more details on 5 key partnerships at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS).

DHL Express Sub-Saharan Africa

GIBS's Centre for African Management and Markets (CAMM) and DHL Express Sub-Saharan Africa formalised a three-year research partnership in May 2023. During the 2024-2025 evidence period, the partners produced ten publicly accessible research papers and convened two in-person events at GIBS. The portfolio addressed connectivity and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) implementation, economic complexity and export diversification, second cities and investment hubs, agritech and inclusive prosperity, and Africa's position in BRICS+ and global flows.



CAMM led the research design, analysis and writing. DHL provided funding, practitioner guidance, market insight, access to relevant data and dissemination support. Together, the partners positioned the outputs as open, practice-oriented thought leadership for business leaders, investors, policymakers, researchers and entrepreneurs. The 22 May 2025 African Agritech launch featured DHL CEO Hennie Heymans, CAMM researcher Francois Fouche and agricultural economist Wandile Sihlobo.



African management challenges addressed

- **Connectivity and regional integration:** strengthening trade links, AfCFTA implementation, border systems, logistics corridors and the networks through which prosperity spreads.
- **Economic complexity and export diversification:** identifying realistic pathways for African economies to expand into more sophisticated products and services and move progressively up the complexity ladder.
- **Investment-led development:** responding to declining aid by examining how productive foreign direct investment can support growth, employment, productive capacity and resilience.
- **Spatially uneven growth:** exploring second cities, investment hubs, transport nerve centres, resource deposits and corridors of connectivity, including how capital is attracted and used.
- **Technology, agriculture and inclusive prosperity:** examining how agritech, digital platforms, logistics and productivity improvements can support food systems, farmers and poverty reduction.
- **Africa's global positioning:** assessing the depth of BRICS+ integration through flows of trade, capital, information and people, and considering alternative development scenarios for the continent.

Roles, engagement and a 2025 evidence spotlight

Respective roles

CAMM led the research design, analysis and writing, drawing on its network of economists, researchers and African-market specialists. DHL provided funding, practitioner guidance, logistics and market insight, access to relevant data and support for dissemination. DHL leadership, including CEO Hennie Heymans, participated actively in forewords, launches and public conversations. The partners jointly positioned the outputs as open thought leadership intended to support better strategic decisions across business, policy and society.



Stakeholder and student engagement

Engagement during this period was primarily stakeholder-facing rather than a formal student-learning intervention. Public and in-person events at GIBS brought together business leaders, policymakers, researchers, practitioners, entrepreneurs and members of the wider GIBS community. The 2024 DHL-GIBS Route-to-Market Challenge added an entrepreneurship dimension by engaging African small and medium enterprises. Public videos, partner channels and freely available papers extended access beyond event participants.

2025 evidence spotlight: **African agritech**



From research to public dialogue

The African Agritech paper was launched at GIBS on 22 May 2025, bringing research on productivity, digital technologies, food systems and logistics into public dialogue.

[↗ Read the DHL feature](#)

Cherie Blair Foundation for Women

Since 2022, the GIBS Entrepreneurship Development Academy (EDA) has served as the South African delivery partner of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, with programme support from DHL Express. During 2025, the collaboration continued to equip women entrepreneurs with practical business, financial and leadership capabilities through Road to Growth and Road to Finance, within a wider pathway that also includes HerVenture, Road to Leadership and Mentoring Women in Business.



The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women provides programme design, curriculum, digital learning resources, technical oversight and partner-led monitoring, evaluation, research and learning. GIBS EDA contextualises and delivers the learning in South Africa, including participant recruitment and onboarding, facilitation, learner support, coordination of facilitators and mentors, quality assurance, networking and certification activities. DHL Express supports the partnership through funding and corporate engagement.



The programmes combine facilitated and self-directed learning with practical application. Participants strengthen business and growth plans, improve financial decision-making, identify suitable finance options, prepare investment pitches, and build leadership confidence and professional networks. The work expands women's access to responsible entrepreneurship education and supports more resilient enterprises that can contribute to decent work, community value and inclusive economic participation.

Corteva Agriscience RSA (Pty) Ltd

Since 2021, the GIBS Entrepreneurship Development Academy (EDA) and Corteva Agriscience RSA (Pty) Ltd have collaborated through the #SoilSista Women in Agriculture Programme to strengthen women's participation, leadership and enterprise development in South Africa's agricultural economy. Corteva acts as funder and strategic partner, contributing sector knowledge, agricultural-industry alignment and strategic oversight. GIBS EDA designs the learning approach and curriculum, facilitates training and mentorship, recruits and supports participants, coordinates stakeholders and alumni, and leads monitoring and evaluation.



During the 2025 reporting period, the partnership advanced #SoilSista: A Rural Perspective in Moletji and Makgoba, Limpopo, adapting entrepreneurship and agricultural learning to the realities of rural and subsistence women farmers. Training addressed soil and crop management, pest control, water conservation, financial literacy, business planning and market access. Seventy-three women participated, and three #SoilSista alumnae were trained as local convenors to support peer learning and continued community engagement. Four Sepedi-language radio broadcasts extended key agricultural and enterprise lessons to a wider audience.

The partnership also initiated the 2025–2026 #SoilSista Future Skills Programme, extending alumni learning in digital marketing, financial management, innovation, leadership, strategic growth and commercialisation. This progression reflects a responsive partnership model that uses participant feedback and impact evidence to evolve programme design and strengthen sustainable livelihoods, food security and women's economic participation.

National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC)

From 2024 to 2025, the GIBS Enterprise Development Agency (EDA) partnered with the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC) to design and deliver a national Women Empowerment Programme for women-owned businesses operating in the construction and built-environment sectors.



NHBRC Women Empowerment Programme orientation at GIBS.

The programme responded to barriers experienced by women entrepreneurs in a traditionally male-dominated industry, including limited access to business skills, finance, markets, professional networks, industry exposure and regulatory knowledge.

GIBS served as the programme designer, learning partner and implementation lead, while NHBRC provided funding, strategic direction, sector expertise and alignment with industry transformation priorities. The programme combined five structured learning blocks with entrepreneurship and leadership education, mentorship, coaching, peer learning, networking, regulatory guidance and action learning.

The partnership demonstrates how a business school and a public-sector regulator can combine educational capability and industry expertise to strengthen women-owned enterprises, responsible leadership and inclusive economic participation. The work contributes particularly to SDGs 5, 8, 10 and 11.

Supporting figure



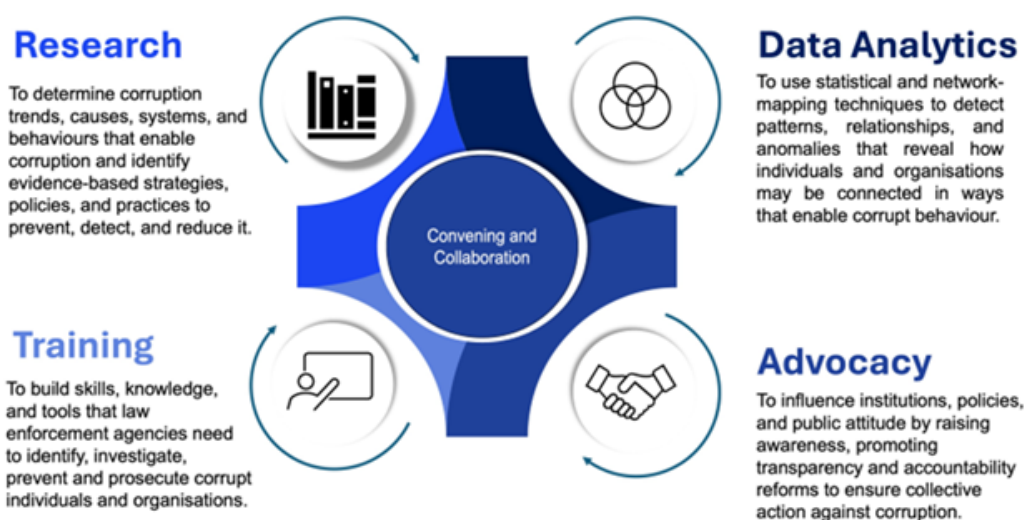
NHBRC Women Empowerment Programme national graduation group.

Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA) and Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA)

Since September 2023, the Centre for Business Ethics (CfBE) has worked with Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA) and Business Against Crime South Africa (BACSA), together with other anti-corruption stakeholders including the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), Daily Maverick, News24 and the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution (CASAC), to address corruption through research, data analytics and cross-sector collaboration.

BLSA/BACSA was the primary funder of the Anti-Corruption Coalition (ACC), the Centre's flagship anti-corruption initiative. During 2025, the ACC conducted research on corruption and maladministration in municipalities through case-law analysis, stakeholder workshops and one-on-one consultations. It also produced an analysis of South Africa's anti-corruption architecture, aligned to the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and proposals of the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council, through stakeholder workshops and a final report co-produced with CASAC. The report was positioned for possible submission to Parliament and the Madlanga Commission.

At the same time, the CfBE built a Power BI-based data-analytics model cross-referencing Companies and Intellectual Property Commission data, Treasury restricted-supplier information, watchlists, disciplinary records and tender data. The model was presented to anti-corruption stakeholders from business, law enforcement, media and NGOs, sparking a memorandum of understanding regarding direct collaboration with the SIU and supporting the investigative reporting of Daily Maverick and News24.



The ACC's integrated approach combines research, data analytics, training and advocacy through convening and collaboration.

Across this work, the CfBE provided the research design, data analytics, convening and report authorship. Cross-sectoral stakeholder workshops brought together participants from business, law enforcement, media, NGOs and academia. The resulting outputs included the Anti-Corruption Architecture report co-produced with CASAC, a municipal corruption and maladministration report, and the Power BI anti-corruption data-analytics model.

The work created pathways for potential policy and investigative influence. The Anti-Corruption Architecture report was positioned for possible submission to Parliament and the Madlanga Commission. The Power BI model prompted collaboration with the SIU on using analytics to support live investigations, while the Centre continued to provide support to journalists undertaking investigative reporting.

Continue telling your story

Turning an African climate partnership into published knowledge

Business Schools for Climate Leadership Africa – 2025 Mini White Paper Series

In 2025, Business Schools for Climate Leadership Africa converted cross-school collaboration into a published body of African climate knowledge. The initiative brings together six founding African business schools and operates through PRME Chapter Africa to strengthen climate education, research and engagement that reflect the continent's contexts.

A central 2025 output was the Climate Leadership Mini White Paper Series. GIBS sponsored the series and Strathmore University Business School supported it. Six papers by 13 authors from six African countries addressed green finance, blended finance, business education and climate action, technology and social enterprise, climate-finance mobilisation, and strategic foresight for corporate climate commitment.

The series demonstrates a complete collaboration chain: an open call, a shared review rubric, structured author feedback, editing, design, publication and dissemination. It created a route for faculty, students, graduates and research associates to translate existing work into concise, practice-oriented resources for business and education audiences. GIBS contributors included faculty and MBA graduate authors.

Evidence and measurement snapshot





Building collective action against gender-based violence

During 2025, the CfBE worked with Nottingham Trent University and the National Business Initiative (NBI), with funding through the Ford Foundation, to address gender-based violence prevention and response in a business and workplace context. The partnership brought together an international academic institution, a South African business-led NGO and an international philanthropic foundation around a shared responsible-management challenge.



The WeDare GBV Repository was launched on 3 September 2025 as a shared platform for learning and collective action.

The partners co-developed and launched, in September 2025, an online repository designed to store and disseminate gender-based violence-related blueprints, reports and strategies for different stakeholder groups. Drawing on project-partner expertise and the NBI community of practice, the public platform brings together blueprints, reports, corporate case studies and tools intended to track uptake and usage.

The CfBE contributed research and content expertise and supported platform development. Nottingham Trent University served as the academic and research partner, while the NBI convened its corporate community of practice and worked to identify new corporate partners. SPAR and ABSA were among the organisations being onboarded ahead of scaling the platform's initial uptake, while the Ford Foundation provided funding support.

The repository reached GBV project partners and the NBI community of practice and created a public online space for knowledge exchange. The September 2025 launch included a live walkthrough, a panel discussion featuring company case studies and an open invitation for organisations to contribute their stories. It positioned the platform as a common, cross-sector space for GBV-related knowledge exchange and coordination between organisations and communities in South Africa and beyond. The onboarding of corporate partners was early evidence of organisational uptake.

Values in action By sharing knowledge and bringing organisations into a community of practice, the initiative turns dignity, inclusion and gender equity into a platform for coordinated workplace and societal action.



GIBS Celebrates Harvard Business Impact Partnership

In September 2025, GIBS was recognised as a Harvard Business Impact (HBI) partner, with the publication of 22 new GIBS peer-reviewed cases and teaching notes in the newly launched Harvard Africa Case Collection.

This milestone highlights the school's growing influence across international publishing platforms, with a strong portfolio of award-winning cases and teaching notes. It reflects GIBS' ongoing commitment to advancing African business scholarship and contributing to global academic excellence.

As a Harvard Business Impact partner, GIBS is uniquely positioned to extend its influence beyond the continent by contributing to a global ecosystem of transformative, research-driven learning. Through this partnership, GIBS leverages Harvard Business Impact's global reach spanning over 75 countries to amplify African perspectives in leadership and management education.

“... GIBS is part of a global network committed to transformative, research-based learning,” said GIBS Dean, Professor Morris Mthombeni. “The incorporation of thorough teaching notes with our peer-reviewed cases, ensures that faculty and instructors worldwide can adapt GIBS cases for a wide array of management courses, bridging theory and practice for students inside and outside Africa.”





Practice

We adopt responsible and accountable management principles in our own governance and operations.

How We Define Practice

At GIBS, Practice means translating responsible management into consistent, ethical and inclusive action across governance, leadership, operations, partnerships and daily conduct. We apply University of Pretoria policies where appropriate and develop GIBS policies where required. We implement, monitor, learn and improve using evidence and stakeholder feedback.

Institutional Policies and Practices

- ❖ Accreditation body recommendation documents
- ❖ AI use guide
- ❖ Campus operations guides
- ❖ Environmental stewardship policies
- ❖ Ethical leadership or good governance policies
- ❖ Faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion guidelines
- ❖ Professional training opportunities
- ❖ Student equity, diversity, inclusion
- ❖ Sustainability strategy or strategic plan (school or university level)
- ❖ Anti-discrimination policy
- ❖ Water
- ❖ Curriculum guidelines

Policy Documents Related to RME and/or Sustainability

GIBS LLM Policy

[View document](#)  [Download document](#) 

Practice Awards

In 2025, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) received 1 award for responsible and/or sustainable practices.



PRME Recognition of Excellence in 2025 Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) Reporting – GIBS

Granter: Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), United Nations Global Compact

Grantee: Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), University of Pretoria

Award Description:

External recognition supports the evidence of GIBS's responsible-management practice. PRME recognised GIBS as one of ten schools who were presented with an award for Excellence in 2025 Sharing Information on Progress Reporting. The recognition relates to GIBS's 2025 SIP Report, submitted on 30 September 2025, and acknowledges transparent, evidence-based reporting, strategic integration of sustainability and the SDGs, and continuous improvement. The award was announced at the 2026 PRME Global Forum in Cairo, Egypt.

Continue telling your story

Our Commitment to Sustainability and Climate Leadership 2026

Our Commitment to Sustainability and Climate Leadership 2026

At GIBS, we are committed to promoting sustainable development and environmental stewardship. We recognise the importance of sustainable development in fostering long-term economic growth while preserving natural resources for future generations. Businesses have a responsibility to contribute positively to society and mitigate the impact of their actions on the environment.

Climate Leadership as a Strategic Objective:

In line with our commitment to sustainable development, GIBS has included climate leadership as a core strategic objective for the School. We understand that climate change poses significant risks to our planet, and we are responsible for taking proactive steps to mitigate our impact. By embracing climate leadership, we aim to inspire and encourage others to join us in creating a sustainable future and to play a leading role in driving positive change within our industry.

Measurement of Carbon Emissions:

In the 2022 financial year, we took an initial step towards our sustainability goals by measuring our carbon emissions for the first time. This provided a baseline against which we can assess our progress.

Reducing GIBS' Carbon Footprint:

We continue to identify ways to reduce our environmental impact effectively. During 2025, we undertook the following initiatives:



Fuel Emissions:

Reduced generator usage has lowered fuel consumption. We continue to promote GIBS' flexible work policy, helping employees reduce their individual carbon emissions by traveling less.



Supply Chain:

Continued usage of aper cups for water coolers, wooden spoons for coffee stations and biodegradable water bottles.



Waste Management:

We continue to recycle used cooking oil and have implemented an e-waste management programme to ensure the responsible disposal of electronic devices.



Greening The Campus:

An energy performance audit and certification established a campus benchmark to measure future improvements.



Water Saving:

Additional Propelair toilets were installed across campus to further reduce water consumption.

As an organisation, we are proud members of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), in line with our commitment to sustainability. Our membership demonstrates our commitment to cultivating responsible business practices and embedding sustainability, social responsibility, and ethics into every aspect of our business.

Environmental Achievements

Through the implementation of waste hierarchy options

CARBON DIOXIDE SAVED



21 489 m³CO₂

WATER SAVED



2 859 425 litres

TREES SAVED



152

RECYCLED WASTE VOLUME

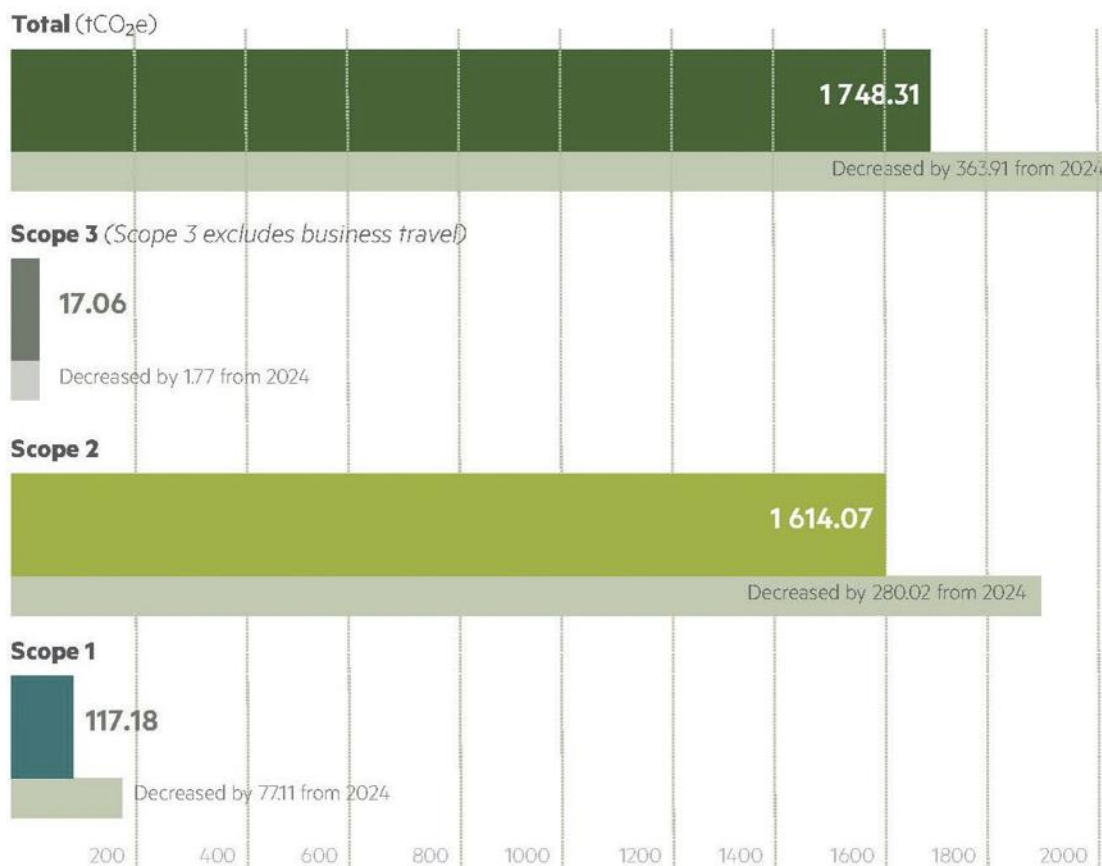


41 %

Carbon Footprint

FY 2025 | 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025 | tCO₂e

PRME



Energy Audit and Transition to Renewable Energy:

An energy audit conducted in the 2022 financial year established a baseline for campus energy consumption and informed GIBS' plan to reduce reliance on environmentally unsustainable energy sources. Solar power was identified as the most economically and environmentally viable solution for the campus. A comprehensive proposal and high-level costing were subsequently approved by the GIBS Board and await the allocation of the required funding.

In the interim, measures to reduce diesel consumption from the School's standby generators have contributed to a lower carbon footprint. In 2025, total emissions decreased by 363.91 tCO₂e compared with 2024. Emissions declined across all reported scopes, including a 280.02 tCO₂e reduction in Scope 2 emissions and a 77.11 tCO₂e reduction in Scope 1 emissions. Electricity consumption remained the largest contributor to GIBS' overall carbon footprint, reinforcing the importance of the School's planned transition to renewable energy.

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria





Share

We share our successes and failures with each other to enable our collective learning and best live our common values and purpose.



How We Define Share

At GIBS, Share means openly and responsibly communicating knowledge, progress, achievements, challenges and lessons with internal and external stakeholders. We make research, practice and institutional experience accessible for scrutiny, dialogue and application, share successes and failures transparently, invite feedback and enable collective learning.

Engagement Opportunities

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) offers transparent engagement opportunities for members of our institution and community to contribute to our sustainability and responsibility efforts in the following ways:

- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Community events and consultation forums
- ❖ Feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, suggestion boxes)
- ❖ Open faculty and student meetings and town halls
- ❖ Research publications, white papers and case studies
- ❖ Public conferences, seminars, webinars and dialogues
- ❖ Digital platforms, newsletters, videos, podcasts and social media
- ❖ Media articles and practitioner publications
- ❖ Public events and panel discussions

Communication Audiences

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) communicates its policies and progress on sustainable development and responsibility with:

- ❖ Boards and advisory committees
- ❖ Faculty and staff
- ❖ Prospective and current students
- ❖ PRME, UN Global Compact and PRME Chapter networks
- ❖ Accreditation bodies

Communication Barriers

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) faces the following barriers in transparent communications:



Engagement
gaps



Feedback
loops



Inconsistent
updates

Continue telling your story

When Africa Teaches the World: The GIBS Case Study Hub and Ivey Publishing

When Africa Teaches the World: The GIBS Case Study Hub and Ivey Publishing

The GIBS Case Study Hub and Ivey Publishing created a platform for African educators and case writers to shape global management learning.

On 10 and 11 September 2025, the GIBS Case Study Hub, in partnership with Ivey Publishing, hosted the second African Case Study Conference at the GIBS campus. The gathering brought academics, educators, case writers and industry practitioners together to strengthen the writing, teaching and use of cases grounded in African business realities.



Dr Nicole Haggerty of Ivey Business School addresses conference participants at GIBS.

The programme connected knowledge exchange with practical capability development. Skills workshops addressed compelling case openings, the use of artificial intelligence in case writing, and the design of cases and teaching notes for contemporary learners. Work-in-progress sessions enabled

writers to test ideas, receive structured peer feedback and refine material for possible publication. Contributors from GIBS, Ivey Publishing, The Case Centre, the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business and the American University of Beirut broadened the institutional conversation.



Prof Albert Wöcke, Head of the GIBS Case Study Hub.

Cases as a discipline of judgement

Context-rich cases ask students to interpret incomplete information, weigh competing interests and make decisions where there may be no universally correct answer. By centring African organisations and leaders, the case method can help future managers understand how social relationships, institutions, resource constraints and local knowledge shape responsible business decisions.

VOICES FROM THE KEYNOTE | SIX LENSES

Africa as a strategy laboratory

Key themes shared in the keynote included innovation under constraint, informality as an organising logic, Ubuntu and communal leadership, entrepreneurship as livelihood and agency, systemic crisis management, and regenerative sustainability. Together, these perspectives challenge one-way knowledge transfer and demonstrate how African business experience can expand global management thinking.

1. Business-model innovation under constraint. African organisations frequently innovate amid infrastructure gaps, regulatory complexity and scarce resources. This highlights relevance, frugality and user-centred design as sources of strategic value.
2. Informality as an organising logic. Informal markets are adaptive ecosystems with relationships, rules and trust. They offer insights into resilience, alternative governance and enterprise beyond formal institutional structures.
3. Ubuntu and communal leadership. African leadership traditions foreground interdependence, relational ethics and collective well-being, challenging models built mainly around hierarchy and individual achievement.
4. Entrepreneurship as livelihood and agency. Entrepreneurship is often connected to survival, care, reciprocity and community. These realities broaden the dominant narrative of the heroic individual entrepreneur pursuing rapid growth.
5. Systemic crisis management. Leaders operating amid persistent instability develop practices of improvisation, negotiation, institution-building and systems thinking that are increasingly relevant in a global polycrisis.
6. Regenerative sustainability. Circular practices, agroecology, indigenous knowledge and land-based ethics are often embedded in how organisations and communities survive, rather than added later as corporate responsibility initiatives.

"The new narrative should challenge the pathway of knowledge transfer so that when the South speaks, the North listens."

— Dr Nicole Haggerty, keynote address





SIGNATORY

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS)



Address

26 Melville Road, Illovo, 2146
South Africa



Website

<https://www.gibs.co.za>