by Eric Cornuel

Introduction

It is a pleasure to introduce this special issue of Global Focus, marking twenty years of EFMD's engagement in international projects.

What began as a small unit has now evolved into a widely recognised specialist in international project management, having completed over 70 projects across nearly all world regions, reflecting the expanding global reach and reputation of EFMD.

Over the past two decades, the department has supported significant developments in higher education. These include supporting its increasing internationalisation, the establishment of entrepreneurship as a core area in management education, the digital transformation of institutions, the recognition of the societal role universities play, and a global shift towards greater inclusivity and gender equality in the higher education sector.

In recognition of these achievements, we invited our partners to showcase one project they were particularly proud to have undertaken with EFMD.

- **Christophe Terrasse** (EFMD) reflects on 20 years of existence of the department, highlighting its contribution to enriching EFMD's services to members.

- **Maciej Pietrzykowski** (PUEB) explores projects leveraging AI to prepare future entrepreneurs with skills for responsible innovation and enhanced business competitiveness.

- **Anna Ginès i Fabrellas** (ESADE) examines the EQUAL4Europe project's contributions to gender equality in academia, focusing on how it has addressed structural barriers to women's career progression.

- **Roberto Escarré** (Universidad de Alicante) underscores the essential role of projects in supporting Latin American universities' international engagement, quality assurance, and community outreach. He advocates thorough evaluation to ensure these initiatives deliver lasting, impactful improvements in higher education.

• **Catherine Pereira Villa** and **Elyn Solano Charris** (Universidad de la Sabana) reflect on the IMPALA project's role in shaping community outreach, entrepreneurship, and advisory services, fostering a socially engaged approach to higher education in Latin America.

• As a conclusion, **Jean-Baptiste Maillard** (EFMD) discusses how international projects enhance institutional collaboration and practical frameworks, supporting higher education internationalisation by addressing shared challenges.

Together, these articles illustrate the wide range of initiatives in which EFMD has taken a leading or active role. Collectively, they offer a comprehensive view of how higher education has modernised, one initiative at a time.

Other partners also kindly provided testimonials describing how their collaboration with EFMD has supported higher education development in their areas, and this complements the detailed description of the above initiatives.

The selection of the presented initiatives was challenging, and we are aware that this issue of Global Focus represents only a fraction of the many initiatives EFMD has supported. We hope that all our partners, regardless of the specific project, feel acknowledged and appreciated—for their trust in EFMD as a consortium member, for their achievements, and for the positive changes they have brought to higher education.

Happy reading!

About the author

Eric Cornuel | President of EFMD Global

20 years, 70 projects, and 13 milestones!

2001

The BISTRO project develops quality guidelines for management education in Central Asia. This is the first of a long series of projects aimed at proposing regional quality provisions in countries where management education is at the development stage.

2004

E-learning is still nascent; EFMD launches eXeL, the eXploring eLearning project, igniting best practice exchanges in European management education. This project marks the start of EFMD digitalisation initiatives.

2006

EFMD partners with AMDISA to establish SAQS South Asia Quality System, backed by EU's Asialink grant, training quality experts across Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and developing the first regional accreditation scheme for South Asia.

2007

Partnering with engineering education networks, EFMD launches three projects to create a quality referential for entrepreneurship education, supporting the sustainable industry approach and contributing to the quality of science and technology education.

2009

The FOSENTHE project introduces entrepreneurship education in management, pioneering a series of initiatives to integrate entrepreneurship as a core component of management education.

2010

The EU delegation in Cuba mandates EFMD to modernise Cuban higher education, laying the groundwork for long-term collaboration with universities to support the evolution of Cuba's economy and foster non-state economic development. The long-term initiative will span over 12 years through the FORGEC and Intercambio de Expertos Cuba-Europe projects.

DIGITAL

ENTREPRE-NEURSHIP

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

2013

The TNE-QA project helps establish quality standards for transnational education in Armenia and Georgia, initiating robust partnerships in the Caucasus region, paving the way for other initiatives with the region's universities.

INTERNATIONALISATION

2018

Cooperation with Latin America intensifies, with Colombia added as a partner country. The IMPALA flagship project creates frameworks for universities' third mission development. Key learning points are later used to design the SQUARE project in Georgia.

2021

Continuing a long-term partnership with PUEB, EFMD supports European projects in green entrepreneurship and digital education, EFMD participates in FoDiGreT and DiSuDeSME projects

2025

EFMD launches its latest flagship project, PRODIGE, and collaborates with the Georgian Ministry, National Quality Agency, and major universities to prepare for the recognition of digital education, setting and establishing national quality standards.

QUALITY

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025

SOCIAL IMPACT

The FORINT flagship project supports Latin American universities in developing internationalisation strategies, and preparing similar projects in the Philippines and Tanzania.

2017

EFMD partners in three initiatives promoting inclusive, ethical management education:

- The IDEA project promotes inclusive digital education, answering an EU call for enhanced digital learning after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Collaboration with Israeli institutions to develop capacity in inclusive social finance in the framework of the IFI project.
- Partnership in EQUAL4EUROPE (E4E) to advance gender equality in business and management schools.

2020

EFMD co-leads the DIVE project, advancing Higher Education digitalisation in Vietnam. It launches the EXIL project to aid European universities in welcoming exiled students, as part of the EU's response to Russian aggression in Ukraine.

2024