

Universidades Lusíada

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Education against corruption

<http://hdl.handle.net/11067/6966>

<https://doi.org/10.34628/937Q-QR96>

Metadados

Data de Publicação

2024

Resumo

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Palavras Chave

Corrupção - Bulgária, Ensino superior - Fins e objectivos - Bulgária

Tipo

article

Revisão de Pares

Não

Coleções

[ULL-FD] LD, s. 2, suplemento (2024)

Esta página foi gerada automaticamente em 2024-11-22T17:58:51Z com informação proveniente do Repositório

EDUCATION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Dimitar Dimitrov ³⁴

It's pleasure to join this Congress. Thank you very much for the kind invitation from the Rector of the University. It is a interesting topic and for me it's a pleasure to share my experience with anti-corruption education in my country.

I like very much this metaphor of going to gym, from the previous speaker, education is something like this, you know better that way. We are one of the biggest universities in Bulgaria, a typical business university, mostly specialized in the field of economics, but we also have law, where the problems of corruption also are, journalism, sociology, administration and management. A typical business university with 15 000 students, many doctoral students, international projects and other things, based in Sofia.

I'm specialized in the field of security and defence economics. Corruption provokes many problems with security and is also very expensive for the whole society. That's why my interest, not only mine, but the interest of my colleagues from the department national of regional security in our university on this phenomenon.

I can show many interesting examples from the world when a very small amount of bribery could provoke very big events like terrorist attacks in airplanes, very big problems with computer security or other things. Sometimes people underestimate these problems, depending on the culture, on the attitudes and think it's appropriated for their culture. Sometimes they don't. Some countries have zero tolerance with the phenomena of corruption. The cost of

³⁴ Rector of University of National and World Economy, Bulgaria. Intervenção proferida presencialmente em língua inglesa. (<https://doi.org/10.34628/937Q-QR96>)

corruption is very big, but sometimes people don't realize how big are the consequences of such kind of activities.

So, my interest to this started in 2016, when I attended to a round table in Albania. It was organized by UNODC in Vienna and I was the only economist at this meeting. It was strange, there was one professor in political studies, but all the others were professors in law. This provoked many interesting questions. Why only people from law faculties are dealing with this problem? My point of view was that this is very important, not only for the laws related to the topic anti-corruption, but is also related with business ethics. It is better for the students, not only for the law students, to know what kind of rules they have to follow and how they must implement them.

Every other student, even for technical studies should know what is corruption and what is the real price of corruption for enterprises, for companies, for universities, for the whole society. That's why we started to develop this idea, because here we are talking about sustainability. We started to develop this idea of anticorruption education, not only for the law students in our university or related universities. We started with an agreement with UNODC in Vienna, together with our government, our deputy Prime Minister signed an agreement with UNODC with a paragraph saying that both organizations and our government will support public anti-corruption education for all universities in Bulgaria and will stimulate this knowledge to all students in Bulgaria. In the next years, 2017 and 2018, we organized two anti-corruption academies. From the educational point of view, it is not so easy to include this kind of discipline to the curriculum of the economics. Some disagree because they think that this discipline is not suitable for the economists, it is more related to law degrees and other reasons. But we decided to avoid this discussion and opened it, providing this knowledge to all the students in our university.

We organized this anti-corruption academy and receive the support from the Council of Ministers, several NGO's which are dealing with anti-corruption matters, the Minister of Interior, the World Bank, the European Commission in Bulgaria and many oth-

ers. We organized series of public lectures with some practical examples on how these organizations are dealing with corruption. We had also the German Foundation which have projects related with anti-corruption as well. It was very interesting for all kind of students. At the end of the lectures, we provided certificates for the participants.

Some of these institutions have their own anti-corruption units and it was very interesting to see the different point of views on this matter, namely the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, educational organizations, because corruption can be anywhere. The students were able to understand the general legislative framework of anti-corruption, but also to learn about culture, attitude, good practices here and in other countries. Step by step, as we go to the gym, we are providing stable knowledge and a good attitude towards this phenomenon.

With the help of one of the anti-corruption bodies in our country, which deals with corruption in the high level of politicians and high-level members of the State we created the Anti-corruption Master Program in our university. We believe this is not enough only to know jurisdictional problems, definitions, concrete laws and other things, but we have also to stablish good administration and good organization to provide knowledge about how to follow the procedures, openness, transparency, communication with the society, where are the weak parts in the laws which allows legal corruption. This anti-corruption master program in economics was very successful for several years, so with the help of our students and people who already work with the subject of corruption in their organizations, we were able to provide this master degree, publish some books, participate in some small projects with UNODC, one of them with one of our colleagues also called Dimitrov about ethics and attitudes of the students towards the corruption. It was a small but very interesting and valuable project to educate the students about this phenomenon, what they should expect, the different country documents, code of conducts, different international agreements so step by step we are increasing the level of knowledge and attitude of our students towards this very complex matter. There is

a place for many other projects, publications, scientific discussions also on how to fight corruption, including many other conferences in our university. Slowly we are broadening our research efforts and our attitude over this phenomenon.

(Resumo em português)

A ideia de promover na Bulgária em contexto publico a educação contra a corrupção não surgiu na Universidade que dirijo ou em alguma relacionada. Estava contida num acordo celebrado em Viena entre o UNODC e o governo da Bulgária, no qual entre outros aspectos se previa o apoio da organização e do governo à educação pública contra a corrupção em todas as Universidades da Bulgária e ao respectivo conhecimento em geral, junto dos estudantes do país.

Nos anos seguintes, 2017 e 2018, com apoio de várias entidades organizaram-se cursos orientados para a anticorrupção, nas quais se realizaram múltiplas palestras públicas com exemplos práticos de como se devia e estava a lidar com o fenómeno. Os alunos puderam aceder ao quadro legislativo no qual se fazia o combate e aprender sobre cultura, atitude e boas práticas nesse sentido, seguidas na Bulgária e outros países. Passo a passo, tal como quando se vai regularmente ao ginásio – recupero aqui o exemplo dado na intervenção anterior – foi sendo proporcionado conhecimento estável e informação correcta sobre a atitude correcta perante o fenómeno.

Criou-se depois um Mestrado em Anticorrupção na Universidade que dirijo. Acreditamos que não basta conhecer os problemas jurídicos que se colocam, as definições, as leis concretas, sendo igualmente importante transmitir os parâmetros de uma boa administração e organização, fornecendo conhecimento sobre procedimentos, abertura, transparência, comunicação com a sociedade e identificação das insuficiências que permitem a corrupção legal. Naturalmente, na minha Universidade há ainda lugar para muitas outras iniciativas, como projetos, publicações e debates científicos sobre como combater a corrupção. Lentamente, mas com passos seguros, ampliamos os nossos esforços sobre a luta contra o fenómeno.