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Education for Justice (E4J): Promoting the Rule of Law through Integrity and Ethics Education¹

Abstract: In this paper, we discuss an innovative approach to teaching integrity and ethics at university level. In particular, we discuss the University Modules on Integrity and Ethics, which the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) developed under its Education for Justice (E4J) initiative. UNODC's involvement in developing educational materials stems from the recognition that education plays a crucial role in promoting the rule of law and crime prevention. The E4J University Modules encourage lecturers from different regions and disciplines to incorporate integrity and ethics education into their programmes and courses. The paper consists of three parts. The first part introduces the new approach to global ethics education that E4J offers. The second part discusses the development of integrity and ethics modules. The third part explores their implementation and the ways in which lecturers can use the materials to promote a culture of lawfulness.

Keywords: integrity, ethics, Education for Justice, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, university education.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses University Modules on Integrity and Ethics developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under its Education for Justice (E4J) initiative¹. E4J is an innovative and comprehensive educational initiative

¹ The paper was authored by UNODC staff member Ms. Sigall Horovitz and UNODC consultant Mr. Alex Petkov who work on the development of E4J University Modules on Integrity and Ethics.

that aims to promote a global culture of lawfulness by facilitating the integration of crime prevention and other rule of law aspects into all levels of education. At the university level, E4J pursues this aim through encouraging teaching on issues related to UNODC's mandate areas, including anti-corruption, organized crime, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, counter-terrorism, cybercrime, firearms trafficking, criminal justice and crime prevention, as well as integrity and ethics. In each of the above areas, E4J is developing and disseminating university modules as well as related educational materials and innovative teaching tools, which lecturers can adapt to their specific contexts and incorporate into their courses. In this context, on 13 June 2018, UNODC formally launched a series of 14 University Modules on Integrity and Ethics.

Before discussing the University Modules on Integrity and Ethics, it should be noted that the E4J initiative was launched as part of UNODC's efforts to implement the Doha Declaration on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice into the Wider United Nations Agenda to Address Social and Economic Challenges and to Promote the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, and Public Participation, adopted by the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2015.² The Doha Declaration recognizes the fundamental role of universal education for children and youth as key to preventing crime, terrorism and corruption, as well as promoting a sustainable development. The E4J initiative is also closely linked with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes the importance of education for ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity for all³.

2. Modules on Integrity and Ethics

As mentioned above, the university modules developed by E4J address various areas that fall under the mandate of UNODC, such as corruption, terrorism and organized crime, as well as the cross cutting area of integrity and ethics. While UNODC's mandate areas have a relatively clear scope and are dealt with through various UN instruments, the field of integrity and ethics is rather abstract and "decentralized", and is not regulated by a specific UN convention or protocol. This required the E4J initiative to define the conceptual framework within which to develop integrity and ethics educational materials that would be consistent with broader E4J aims and UNODC goals, and would, at the same time, add value to existing programmes and courses in universities around the world.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations. See more about E4J at: <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/index.html> (13.12.2018).

2 https://www.unodc.org/documents/congress/Declaration/V1504151_English.pdf (13.12.2018).

3 <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/> (13.12.2018).

It is noted in this regard that many academic institutions throughout the world offer ethics courses, often within their philosophy departments or graduate programmes in business and public administration. Furthermore, faculties of law, medicine, science and journalism, to name a few, offer professional ethics courses in an effort to promote responsible conduct within certain professions. However, many of the courses are very specialized and hence lack a proper theoretical contextualization of complex topics such as integrity and ethics. In addition, ethics courses are more prevalent in some regions and less common in others.

Promoting a global culture of lawfulness requires a more pervasive and universal approach to ethics education, supported by fostering ethical learning environments and active engagement of students worldwide. Such an approach could and should be relevant to university students at all levels and disciplines, and across all regions and cultures. The E4J University Modules on Integrity and Ethics were designed to support such an approach. Moreover, in order to provide effective support in such a vast field, the Modules seek to strike a balance between a generic framework and more selective target areas that make provision for regional or functional contexts. Thus, for example, while some of the Modules focus on core integrity and ethics topics such as universal values, ethics and society, ethical leadership, diversity and pluralism, behavioural ethics, and gender dimensions of ethics, other Modules explore the application of integrity and ethics in certain areas of practice such as business, law, media, public service and the various professions. All of the Modules, however, can be taught to students of all levels and disciplines.

In addition to offering a new approach to global ethics education, the E4J initiative also aims to add value to existing university programmes by offering Modules that have been developed by the United Nations, validated by leading academics, reflect global data, benefit from the input of international experts, incorporate innovative teaching approaches, and are linked to other global issues, including the Sustainable Development Goals and UNODC mandate areas such as organized crime and anti-corruption. E4J also aims to generate increased impact through involving stakeholders in localizing and regionalizing the Modules rather than merely leaving them as static “paper” tools.

3. Developing the Modules

Ahead of developing the Modules, UNODC held meetings with academic ethics educators from various disciplines and regions, bringing them together to discuss and make recommendations on how to achieve the above aims. The first such consultation took place in March 2017 at the UNODC headquarters in Vienna,

and three regional meetings were held in April 2017 in various parts of the world⁴. Based on the discussions at these meetings, UNODC identified key principles and approaches that subsequently underpinned the development of the E4J University Module on Integrity and Ethics. The following discussion focuses on these principles and approaches.

One of the main principles that guided the development of the Modules was the need to ensure that university lecturers from various disciplines and sub-disciplines will be able to easily adapt and use the Modules in their teaching of undergraduate and graduate students. Accordingly, the Modules were designed as multidisciplinary and multi-level resources, and they use clear and non-technical language. They are also flexible in the sense that they provide a menu of options rather than prescribing a fixed way of teaching. This ensures that the Modules are easily adaptable to different regions and disciplines, and can serve a variety of uses. In addition, they were designed so that lecturers who do not teach ethics specifically would be able to teach the Modules as ethics components within non-ethics courses. Furthermore, in line with recommendations made in expert consultations, the Modules place an emphasis on common universal values, but leave room for diverse perspectives so that lecturers can easily adapt them to different local and cultural contexts.

Another recommendation made during the consultations, and which has guided the module development process, was the need to encourage critical thinking and prepare students for value-driven and effective action. Pursuant to this recommendation, the Modules have a strong emphasis on interactive and experiential exercises that require students to analyse cases, force them to engage with the issues, and help them internalize the Modules' messages. It was also suggested that E4J draws on good practices from ethics practitioners in the private sector, e.g. those developing and delivering training in the ethics and compliance field in companies. This has indeed been followed in the development of the Modules. The experts also recommended that the Modules adopt the following approaches in order to ensure their sustainable relevance and effectiveness:

- Emphasize the importance of integrity and ethics to everyday life;
- Connect theory and practice;
- Focus on global ethics and universal values, while leaving room for considering issues from diverse regional/cultural perspectives without succumbing to ethical relativism;
- Have an action orientation (not merely teach what is the right thing to do, but also teach how to get the right thing done, e.g. by drawing on the growing field of behavioural ethics and approaches such as the “Giving Voice to Values” post-decision making approach);

4 Further information available at www.unodc.org/e4j. (13.12.2018).

- Use a wide variety of pedagogical techniques, for example, experiential learning and group based work;
- Use, where possible, open source materials that are publicly and easily accessible.
- Finally, it was suggested in the consultations that some Modules should address issues of general ethics and others should deal with applied areas of ethics. The generic ethics Modules would be relevant to some lecturers as a stand-alone, while for other lecturers they can provide a lens through which to view and teach the applied ethics Modules.

As a starting point, E4J developed 14 modules covering areas of particular relevance to E4J aims, ranging from general to applied topics. Each module detailed teaching plans with expected learning outcomes, discussion of relevant issues, reading lists containing core literature on the subject, student activities and assessments as well as additional teaching tools and resources such as websites, video demonstrations, case studies, simulations, publications and faculty development materials. Each Module is designed as a three-hour class but also provides guidelines on how to develop it into a full course. In 2017/18, UNODC held two expert meetings dedicated to validating the Modules. Both meetings were held at the premises of the European Public Law Organization (EPLO), and involved more than 45 academic experts from around the world. In these meetings, the experts discussed and fine tuned the Modules and, finally, approved them for publication⁵. All 14 Modules are available on the E4J website, with an accompanying Teaching Guide. Below is a list of the Modules' titles:

- Module 1: Integrity and Ethics: Introduction and conceptual framework
- Module 2: Ethics and universal values
- Module 3: Ethics and society
- Module 4: Ethical leadership
- Module 5: Ethics, diversity and pluralism
- Module 6: Ethical living
- Module 7: Strategies for ethical action
- Module 8: Behavioural ethics
- Module 9: Gender dimensions of ethics
- Module 10: Media integrity and ethics
- Module 11: Business integrity and ethics
- Module 12: Integrity, ethics and law
- Module 13: Public integrity and ethics
- Module 14: Professional ethics

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2GxuXxsVbE>. Accessed on 13.12.2018.

4. The way forward

In addition to offering the University Modules on Integrity and Ethics, the E4J initiative also offers a Teaching Guide on Integrity and Ethics that accompanies the Modules and provides additional pedagogical guidance. The Teaching Guide was initially conceived as a brief manual containing background information and the Modules themselves. However, in the pre-module consultations, it was recommended that E4J develop a manual on good and innovative practices for teaching integrity and ethics and promoting ethical behaviour. Accordingly, the Teaching Guide delves deeper into theories of teaching and learning, and applies them to the Modules and to ethics education more generally. It also provides advice on how to adapt the Modules to different contexts, how to incorporate them in existing programmes, and how to combine certain Modules into thematic clusters. The Teaching Guide is available on the E4J website and forms the basis for the UNODC training workshops organised with the view of strengthening the capacity of lecturers from around the world to teach on the basis of the Modules. In this process of rolling out the Modules, UNODC seeks to engage as many universities and academics as possible in order to strengthen integrity and ethics education worldwide.

It is also noted that the expert consultations recommended that E4J should encourage the development of good practices in the teaching of integrity and ethics at university level, including by supporting the creation of ethical learning environments, encouraging teachers to become champions of integrity and ethical role models, and motivating academics to teach the modules as components in non-ethics courses at their school. E4J currently operationalizes these recommendations. As a first step, and pursuant to the experts' advice, E4J engaged participants who are committed to being role models of ethical behaviour within and beyond the classroom to ensure credibility and effectiveness of the courses.

The experts also considered that E4J should support the development of innovative tools to facilitate the teaching of integrity and ethics in universities, such as the following tools:

- Global student challenges (involving faculty globally while engaging students locally);
- Integrity and ethics competitions and prizes (e.g. competitions to develop innovative means of using smart phones and other mobile devices for ethics education, essay competitions, etc.);
- Case studies, particularly those emphasizing positive ethical behaviour and action oriented approaches;
- Scenarios, simulations, role-playing, and dilemma-based tools;
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), apps, videos, games, etc.;
- Involve students in creating e-learning tools/games/videos on ethical issues.

Some of these approaches are already included in the Modules. Others will be considered in the context of rolling out the Modules.

One of the main recommendations emerging from the consultations was that, in the process of implementing the Modules and associated materials, E4J should engage in a continuous feedback loop to enhance and keep the materials relevant. Feedback should be generated, where possible, through available survey methods (such as Survey Monkey) to ascertain what students and academics find useful. Furthermore, in developing and implementing the Modules, E4J should involve relevant stakeholders from different cultures/regions, including research-oriented academics, ethics centres, and education ministries where appropriate.

Indeed, the principle of inclusiveness has underpinned the module development process, in which E4J involved more than 70 academic experts from over 30 countries. As it rolls out the Modules, E4J continues to engage as many lecturers and other relevant stakeholders as possible in disseminating the Modules and strengthening the capacity of lecturers to teach on their basis. In addition, E4J also invites relevant stakeholders to:

- Organize E4J workshops/side events in networking meetings;
- Consider ways to encourage relevant research;
- Consider relevant methodologies;
- Consider possible links to the private sector/civil society;
- Strengthen the links between ethics education and other E4J subject areas;
- Develop and contribute relevant publications and open source materials to the E4J online database for easy access by teachers and professors;
- Use their own publications, social media, organizational e-lists, etc., to write about and disseminate notices for E4J;
- Promote the E4J initiative in other ways.

In June 2018, UNODC officially launched the University Modules on Ethics and Integrity during the Regional Conference on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was co-organized by the Venezuela-based UNESCO-IESALC institute and took place in Argentina on 11-15 June 2018. The conference brought together thousands of academics from Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss the future of higher education in the region. The Modules were launched at a side event, and were the focus of a lively discussion with the participants. Their interactive exercises especially sparked interest, as they were viewed as an innovative and effective approach to ethics education. In addition, implementation of the Modules in the region was discussed, including their translation into Spanish and regional training of lecturers in Bogota, Colombia.

5. Questions for further discussion

Lecturers who are reading this paper may wish to think about the following questions:

- Are integrity and ethics foreign to the areas you teach?
- Are your students able to identify an ethical dilemma?
- Do they know how to make ethical choices and reach ethical decisions?
- Do they know how to implement ethical decisions?
- Are they committed to acting with integrity?

If the answer to any of these questions is ‘no’ or ‘maybe’, then the Modules could serve as useful ethical components in your own courses.

6. Conclusion

UNODC is committed to supporting academics in delivering high quality education in the areas of rule of law and crime prevention. It does this by providing relevant materials, facilitating exchanges of good practices and organizing training activities. This paper emphasized the importance of ethics education in the context of the UNODC’s overall educational efforts.

The university modules on integrity and ethics, developed under the Education for Justice initiative, offer a flexible approach to delivering ethics education. Lecturers could easily adapt them to their context and integrate them into existing courses in a variety of disciplines, academic institutions, regions and cultures. All 14 modules are available online and can be easily accessed on the E4J website.

With this paper we aim to encourage more lecturers to use the Modules in their programmes as we realize that achieving the E4J goals, including fostering ethical learning environments and a culture of lawfulness among students, requires the active engagement of the academic community.

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