

# The AIESEC way

Toolkit 2007

## Members' guide to better understanding AIESEC

**Last revision of content:** International Congress 2005, Agra – India

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**Intro:**  
The AIESEC Way  
in a Nutshell

AIESEC is a global, non-political, independent, not-for-profit organization run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education.

WHAT IS AIESEC? statement determines the type of organisation we are – the key characteristics of our organisation

Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management.

AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, creed, religion, national, ethnic or social origin.

Peace & fulfillment of  
Humankind's  
Potential

WHAT WE ENVISION is a powerful picture of a world that we would like to bring about as a result of our activities and work

Our international platform enables young people to discover and develop their potential to provide leadership for a positive impact on society

OUR IMPACT statement describes our global mission or purpose – WHAT we DO to contribute to the world we envision?

AIESEC provides its members with an integrated development experience comprised of leadership opportunities, international internships and participation in a global learning environment

OUR VALUES form the foundation of our organisation, guiding our individual and organisational behaviour, actions, and decisions – the core beliefs that we hold as an organisation and dictate how we act

Activating Leadership  
Enjoying Participation  
Striving for Excellence  
Demonstrating Integrity  
Living Diversity  
Acting Sustainably

THE WAY WE DO IT statement explains the key activity AIESEC uses to fulfil its purpose as defined in OUR IMPACT statement – HOW do we aim to impact the world?

AIESEC's identity must be seen as a whole. All parts must be considered together in an interconnected way.

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## Section 1: What is the AIESEC Way?

Before we start looking deeper into THE AIESEC WAY, it is important that we get the terminology right.

A **'way'** description is the explanation of fundamentals of an organization; it is what makes an organization distinct from others based on what it does and how does it.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTIONS AND IDEALS can be totally different in the way they are structured, however the aim is always the same: **to outline the character of an organization.**

### Dictionary meaning of "WAY"

- ✓ **manner:** how something is done or how it happens.
- ✓ **road:** is an identifiable route or path between two or more places.

THE AIESEC WAY gives answers to questions like:

**What is AIESEC?**

**What is our vision for the world?**

**What is our impact?**

**In which way we make that impact possible?**



### GOLDEN RULES ABOUT THE AIESEC WAY:

- ✓ THE AIESEC WAY identity must be seen as a whole. All parts must be considered **together** in an interconnected way.
- ✓ It is much more important to understand what our ideals – *reflected in The AIESEC Way* – mean in depth (and therefore being able to describe it with our own words) rather than memorizing it.
- ✓ THE AIESEC WAY is **NOT** a bunch of nice statements. It is NOT something to learn and then forget about. It tells us what to DO (as an LC, as a Team, as a person) and how to BEHAVE. Therefore it is not just a reading material; it gives direction to our actions.
- ✓ We should constantly remind ourselves of THE AIESEC WAY. It is important that we are able to link our daily work (whether this is matching, organizing an activity or receiving training) with AIESEC's ideals.
- ✓ THE AIESEC WAY is not only a description of the **way** (*manner*) we aim to make a positive impact on society, but also describes the **way** (*path*) we are taking to achieve what we envision for the world.



## A. THE AIESEC WAY – A BRIEF EXPLANATION

When we think about **THE AIESEC WAY** we should consider all the different parts together and not separately. Here is a brief explanation of each aspect and how they link together to build a description of AIESEC and its ideals as organisation.

### WHAT IS AIESEC? – Our Key Characteristics

*AIESEC is a global, non-political, independent, not-for-profit organization run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education.*

*Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management.*

*AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, creed, religion, national, ethnic or social origin.*

The answer to the question 'WHAT IS AIESEC?' identifies the key characteristics of our organisation such as non-political, student-run, non-discriminatory etc.

### WHAT WE ENVISION – Our desire for the world

Our desire for the world, embodied in the alternative conditions we desire to create in society and reflected in the simple statement: 'PEACE AND FULFILMENT OF HUMANKIND'S POTENTIAL', unites and motivates us.

Our descriptions are powerful pictures of a world that we would like to bring about as a result of our activities and work. **WHAT WE ENVISION** for the world is far off, untouchable, and unattainable. It is something that we will always be striving for; it is our ultimate goal.

*Peace & fulfillment of Humankind's Potential*

## OUR IMPACT – Our Purpose of Existence

“  
Our international platform  
**enables** young people  
to discover and develop their potential  
to provide **leadership**  
for a **positive impact** on society  
”

OUR IMPACT statement describes our global mission or purpose – the reason AIESEC exists in the world.

No matter what changes take place in the world, it is the unchanging reason that we are here as an organisation.

It clearly states that AIESEC as organization believes the main positive impact we make to society come as a result of the **leadership characteristics** people develop through the AIESEC Experience.

## THE WAY WE DO IT – Our Main Activity

THE WAY WE DO IT statement explains the manner in which AIESEC fulfils its purpose as defined in OUR IMPACT statement (HOW do we aim to impact the world?)

It is important to define THE WAY WE DO IT in order to bring alignment to the activities that our members do and to provide them with a clear direction and focus for their energies and resources.

“  
AIESEC provides its members  
with an  
**integrated development experience**  
comprised of  
**leadership opportunities,**  
**international internships**  
and participation in a  
**global learning environment**  
”

## OUR VALUES – Our Core Beliefs

“  
Activating Leadership  
Enjoying Participation  
Striving for Excellence  
Demonstrating Integrity  
Living Diversity  
Acting Sustainably  
”

OUR VALUES form the foundation of our organisation, guiding our individual and organisational behaviour, actions, and decisions.

Values are also the **core beliefs** that we hold as an organisation and dictates how we act towards each other and our stakeholders.



Many organizations are working to make a positive impact in our society, as we do. Each one of them has its own approach. We also have our way to make that impact...

**THE AIESEC WAY!**

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS – Other relevant characteristics of AIESEC**

In the [International Compendium](#), as part of THE AIESEC WAY there are three more elements that define who we are and what we do. This three elements support the organizational description of AIESEC.

### **These three elements are**

**1. English is the sole official language of AIESEC<sup>1</sup>.**

As global organization, English acts as official language to facilitate communication among members. All international congresses as well as regional ones should use English as the official language of the meeting, this to ensure equal opportunities for involvement for all international members present in each one of AIESEC events globally.

All materials to be used globally and delivered by AIESEC International should be in English for the same purposes mentioned above.

**2. The logo approved at Presidents Meeting 1990 (Hong Kong) is the official logo of AIESEC<sup>2</sup>.**



**3. AIESEC adopts the AIESEC Code of Ethics along with its supportive structures mentioned<sup>3</sup>.**

The external world message is clear: skills are just not enough. There is no leadership without ethics. As its purpose, AIESEC has to provide leaders for a positive impact in society. The meaning of the positive impact that AIESEC wants to create in the world lies in AIESEC's ability to create, for each and every member, a steering wheel that will shape her/his actions in a life-long basis.

AIESEC ethical process is a deep and steady move to make the AIESEC EXPERIENCE and the our learning environment the gateway to the values-driven leadership the world needs, thus getting AIESEC closer to its organizational description and ideals. The code of ethics adopted by the global plenary is a key milestone in THE AIESEC WAY to develop ethical leaders.

**The purpose of AIESEC CODE OF ETHICS is to:**

- ✓ Lay the foundation for AIESEC to consciously develop ethically sensitive leaders; the code brings Ethics on a conscious level and puts the organization on a virtuous track.
- ✓ Set explicit subjective norms that can act as a compelling reference point for every single member of the organization.
- ✓ Open the gateway to the culture needed for a deeper impact on the individuals that live an AIESEC EXPERIENCE.

The AIESEC CODE OF ETHICS is about the ethical principles we all adhere to, the practices in day-to-day work, interactions and decision-making at all organizational layer and the enforcement mechanisms to align the practices and conducts with OUR VALUES.

The AIESEC CODE OF ETHICS can be found in the [International Compendium](#).

<sup>1</sup> Please note that 'the foundation' term as stated in the International Compendium has been changed to "AIESEC" to simplify understanding by members.

<sup>2</sup> Same as above.

<sup>3</sup> Please not that the text 'as described in Appendix 13' has been deleted from the sentence to simplify understanding by members.



## B. THE AIESEC WAY – DETAILED EXPLANATION

The following notes are meant to support your understanding of each part of [THE AIESEC WAY](#), the links between the different parts and the meaning that each part has to guide our activities globally.

### WHAT IS AIESEC? – Our Key Characteristics

Looking at each part of our [WHAT IS AIESEC?](#) statement and its meaning:

- ✓ **Global** – AIESEC has a global scope and is represented in all continents of the world. One of the most valuable and unique aspects that our organisation has is its global network. AIESEC should make the best use of this global network to enhance the understanding between cultures by running activities that foster participation and co-operation among different countries in the network. Without any doubt our exchange programs create the best conditions for this.
- ✓ **Non-political** - AIESEC does not have a pre-defined or officially accepted political tendency or subscription.
- ✓ **Independent** - AIESEC is not a subsidiary or dependent entity of any other bodies in its work, sustainability or decisions.
- ✓ **Non-for-profit** - AIESEC is not an organisation that exists to generate profit for shareholders. The bottom-line for AIESEC is not money but people that are developing themselves as leaders and then impacting society. It is important of course to have enough resources and be sustainable to ensure we are having the desired impact in society and invest in further improvements for the organization. However, when making decisions, we are guided by the ways to generate more impact and have maximum financial sustainability rather than to simply generate more money.
- ✓ **Run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education** – Students of higher education students and recent graduates manage and run all the core activities of the association. The members of the association are current (includes the ones who have given a break to their studies to dedicate themselves to AIESEC work) or recently graduated students of institutions of higher education.

*AIESEC is a global, non-political, independent, not-for-profit organization run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education.*

*Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management.*

*AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, creed, religion, national, ethnic or social origin.*

Globally our membership comes from student volunteers that join AIESEC to be part of the association and take part of a self-driven development process ([the AIESEC Experience](#)). They are also our stakeholders and the future leadership of AIESEC. That is why we need to work very hard to provide them with enough and high quality leadership opportunities, international internships and ensure that there is a global learning environment in place that offers them a powerful life-changing learning experience.

We must also understand that in today's world, there are more and more organizations like AIESEC that are also attracting student volunteers. Therefore more than ever before, we need to strive to attract and retain highly talented members better than other organisations and ensure that being a member of AIESEC is a very powerful, enriching, exciting opportunity.

We must provide learning platforms that allow our members to develop in such a way that while they are running AIESEC's activities, they learn and develop themselves through interacting with each other and other stakeholders. As a result of their AIESEC EXPERIENCE, our members will also be a driving force of the change we want to create in the world!



- ✓ **Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management** – Today AIESEC has expanded its reach to a wide range of student backgrounds. Our membership base has expanded to university students that are interested in more than just economics.

By [world issues](#) we mean relevant topics of our current society/communities or also future challenges that can be overseen globally. Issues are seen as ‘relevant’ by the impact they have in those communities/societies but also by the interest of our members to get involved and take an active participation by running AIESEC activities around them.

World Issues can be represented by points in debate or controversy in the world on which different parties take various positions. We want our members to be exposed to a presentation of alternatives between which to choose, decide or create new alternatives to make a positive impact in society. Our [Global Learning Networks](#) allow young people with similar interests to connect and develop themselves to make a positive impact in society in their area of interest.

AIESEC aims to deliver [leadership](#) for a positive impact in society. It is imperative that our membership is interested in leadership development. The self-driven learning platform of AIESEC encourages our members to take on leadership positions as a main tool of developing the skill in a process of learning by doing.

In order to generate that positive impact in society, our members are expected to develop [management](#) skills that will help them drive change in whatever sector they choose for their future. Management writer, Mary Parker Follett defined management as *“the art of getting things done through people”*. So, management is not only related to business environment- leaders in different sectors of society (non-corporate, government, etc) need management skills to make things happen.

- ✓ **Does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, creed, religion, national, ethnic or social origin** - AIESEC is an organisation that enjoys and lives diversity, and will not reject participation or contact with people for any of the reasons mentioned above. This does not mean that AIESEC has to join every kind of activity that contributes to lower discrimination, but where its added value might be unique and within the framework of [THE AIESEC WAY](#).

## WHAT WE ENVISION – Our desire for the world



**WHAT WE ENVISION** for the world describes the way that we want to see society in the future. It represents our ‘indefinite desire’.

### What does “Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind’s Potential” symbolize in today’s world?

When trying to understand AIESEC’s ideals, we must be able to look at it in the context of today’s world because the conditions of our world today are completely different in 1948, 1960s or even 1990s.

AIESEC started as an organisation after the Second World War, willing to promote and work for world

peace. AIESEC was deeply influenced by the social, economical and political climate of the world in that period of history. Naturally, the fundamentals of our organisation were shaped based on that reality.

The social, economic, and political state of the world has changed since then and is now changing faster than ever before. We are now living in a world where the risk of having another world war may have be lower even with the raise of terrorism in the late years.

In today’s context, ‘[peace](#)’ should not be interpreted necessarily as absence of a major war. ‘Peace’ symbolizes a world that does not have conflicts that arise from cultural, religious, or other aspects of differences in humanity.

AIESEC ENVISIONS A WORLD where its inhabitants are in continuous dialogue and working together for common goals to ensure prosperity for all. AIESEC wishes to see the world as a community where its peoples respect, enjoy, and understand each other.

Through “Fulfilment of Humankind’s potential” AIESEC expresses its aim to develop individuals who have the knowledge, skills and determination to bring more development to the world.

AIESEC’s aspiration is to offer as many opportunities as possible for young people to discover and develop their potential; people who are responsible, entrepreneurial, culturally sensitive and thirsty for learning more: people who can change the world!

Furthermore, AIESEC wants a society where people constantly learn and contribute to the learning of others to move towards their maximum positive capabilities. This potential is not only as individuals but also mainly as a whole, the humankind community.

## OUR IMPACT – Our Purpose of Existence

OUR IMPACT definition explains the contribution that AIESEC aims to give to society aiming to see the world it envisions.

It is the reason that AIESEC is working for, AIESEC works to fulfil its impact on society.

OUR IMPACT statement implies that:

- ✓ **Our international platform** – It reflects that AIESEC is the *international platform* in which thousands of [‘AIESEC Experiences’](#) are happening every day. The word *international* highlights the global character of the organization and the internationalism present in each one of our activities at global, national or even local level.

*The AIESEC platform consists of a number of different opportunities – physical and virtual – through which an individual creates his/her own AIESEC experience.*

*This same platform also serves to connect our partner organizations to the talented young people within AIESEC.*

*The main opportunities of the platform are [leadership experiences](#), [working abroad](#), [learning networks](#), [conferences](#), and supported [self-discovery](#).*

*Together with the [principles of the AIESEC Experience](#), this platform is how we give young people the desire and capacity to have a positive impact on society – that is the [AIESEC Difference](#).*

- ✓ AIESEC’s role states that the organization **enables young people** to discover and develop their potential themselves, which implies that AIESEC’s aim is to provide a platform for [self-driven learning](#).

*‘AIESEC [enables](#)’ highlights that the role of the organization is to **empower** these individuals, not develop them directly.*

*AIESEC empowers these individuals by ensuring that the international platform is in place and there are enough quality [leadership opportunities](#) and [international internships](#) as well as a global learning environment in which AIESEC’s members can interact and learn from each other (virtual environment, [conferences](#) , [Learning Networks](#), etc).*

- ✓ **To discover and develop their potential** - AIESEC engages young people when they are wrestling with the questions that determine the ambition and direction of their future. AIESEC’s task is to provide support and experiences that shake their thinking and unlocks their true potential. The way they will develop their true potential it is up to them and the way they plan their own AIESEC Experience based on the platform that is offered.

“  
Our international platform  
enables young people  
to discover and develop their potential  
to provide **leadership**  
for a **positive impact** on society  
”

- ✓ **To provide leadership** – AIESEC’s ultimate deliverable is to provide leaders that can challenge the *status quo* and provide solutions to their societies. In **OUR IMPACT** statement, AIESEC expresses its aim to develop leaders who have the knowledge, skills and determination to bring more development to the world.

*AIESEC’s aspiration is to provide our communities with leaders who are socially responsible, entrepreneurs, culturally sensitive and active learners; leaders that are able to impact their societies in a positive way.*

- ✓ **For a positive impact in society** - The development of leadership in individuals is the way that we contribute to our societies, as these leaders would have a positive impact on them in the present and future.

This links to our vision in the sense that to contribute to peace, we need to provide leaders who can make a positive impact in their communities not only across cultures, but also across sectors of society.

This role also represents a direct link with working to contribute to the fulfilment of Humankind’s potential since AIESEC provides a platform for the self-discovery and development of everyone’s potential.

## THE WAY WE DO IT – Our Main Activity

THE WAY WE DO IT defines the main activity of AIESEC in order to fulfil our impact on society; the manner we have chosen to ensure we are making a contribution to the world.

THE WAY WE DO IT implies that:

- ✓ **Provides its members with an INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE** - AIESEC contributes to the development of individuals by providing them an integrated development experience that we call the **AIESEC Experience**.

*The AIESEC Experience is the ideal flow of learning an individual can gain during his/her involvement in AIESEC.*

*The AIESEC Experience represents the main deliverable to young people and is the core of all our activities- the essence of what we do.*

- ✓ **Comprised of (1) LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, (2) INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS and participation in a (3) GLOBAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** – The word ‘**comprised**’ explains that the integrated development experience needs the three elements in order to be complete.

- ✓ **Leadership opportunities** - through the management of projects and activities in over 1000 offices at the local, national, and international level across 100 countries and territories, we provide about 5000 leadership opportunities to our members each year. This provides our members with a range of valuable and practical experience and skills in management and leadership.

*If AIESEC’s ambition is to provide as many integrated development experiences – **AIESEC EXPERIENCES** - as possible, we need to increase the number of leadership opportunities we are offering currently. In this sense **THE WAY WE DO IT** is an ambitious statement and represents the aspiration of the organization towards our activities.*



AIESEC provides its members with an integrated development experience comprised of leadership opportunities, international internships and participation in a global learning environment



- ✓ **International internships** - internship exchanges supply powerful learning experiences for young people. The focus of our exchange experiences is not only to provide a professional experience to the individual but also to provide a more powerful learning experience, which will lead him/her to become more entrepreneur, culturally sensitive, open minded and active learner.

*International Internship Exchange is an ideal tool to develop individuals with a base on the process of self reflection and meta-cognition they pass through when in the host country. When a young person experiences the international internship, his/her worldview is challenged as never before. It is not just the absence of the natural bounds with home (family, friends, culture, etc) but also the opportunity to stand by him/herself, to face the day to day challenges outside of the 'comfort zone', to question his/her own paradigms, and the way things are or the way things work, both at personal and professional level.*

*Due to these reasons AIESEC believes international internships are a crucial component of the AIESEC Experience and all our members should be allowed the opportunity to experience it.*

- ✓ **Participation in a global learning environment** - What makes a learning organization different from other organizations is how unique & different its learning environment is.

The [AIESEC global learning environment](#) has six crucial components:

1. individual discovery and reflection,
2. team experiences,
3. learning circles,
4. conferences and seminars,
5. mentoring, and
6. virtual spaces (forums, blogs and resource sharing).

*This learning environment is built under the AIESEC Experience principles and focuses on a global reach with a local impact, the consolidation of theoretical and practical knowledge using both physical and virtual spaces where each member is at the same time student and teacher, and focuses in a process of individual discovery that aims to lead to self driven development.*

#### POINTS TO NOTE

1. We must understand that the 'AIESEC EXPERIENCE' is our [TOOL](#), our [DELIVERABLE](#) to young people; it is NOT the final result. Through AIESEC experiences, we offer young people the opportunity to discover and develop their potential. Through these learning experiences we aim to create a larger impact on the world by providing leaders able to make positive impact in society as stated in [OUR IMPACT](#) statement.
2. Therefore we must strive to provide a large number of complete 'AIESEC EXPERIENCES' which are high quality and which are truly powerful learning life-changing experiences!
3. The **way** we deliver AIESEC EXPERIENCES needs constant improvements and innovation. The 'AIESEC EXPERIENCE' as we know it right now can change slightly or dramatically in the following years to contribute better to [WHAT WE ENVISION](#) and [OUR IMPACT](#), that is why we name the AIESEC Experience in [THE WAY WE DO IT](#) statement as an '**integrated development experience**'.

We consider the three elements stated in [THE WAY WE DO IT](#) statement as the crucial ones: **leadership opportunities**, **international internships** and the participation on a **global learning environment**.

Please note that the **global learning environment** leaves an open space for innovation around the kind of elements that the learning environment provides our members with. However in the current context we have clearly identified which are the [elements of that learning environment](#).



# Our Values

VALUES guide our actions and operations as an organisation. They make us more conscious about our actions, decisions, and ways of working with each other as one global organisation.

OUR VALUES define the acceptable standards which govern the behaviour of our members within the organization.

Without such values, our members will pursue behaviours that are in line with their own individual value systems, which may lead to behaviours that the AIESEC doesn't wish to encourage within our local committees around the world.

In a smaller organization, the behaviour of individuals is much more visible than in larger ones. In these smaller groups, the need for articulated values is reduced, since unacceptable behaviours can be challenged openly. However, for the larger organization like AIESEC, where desired behaviour is being encouraged by different individuals in different places with different sub-groups, an articulated statement of values can draw an organization together.

Clearly, OUR VALUES are in line with the rest of the statements that comprise THE AIESEC WAY.

So to summarize, OUR VALUES provide a framework for the collective leadership of AIESEC to encourage common norms of behaviour across our global network which will support the achievement of our goals and will support us in pursuing our ideals.

## FIVE WAYS TO LIVE OUT VALUES

However, just as with WHAT WE ENVISION or OUR IMPACT statements, it is one thing to have a written guide to AIESEC's values that remains on the wall of the Local Committee office, or in a folder, but it is quite another thing to have living values which shape our culture - the way that things get done. So here are five suggestions to ensure you have living values...

1. **Communicate OUR VALUES Constantly.** Values should fit with AIESEC's communication, both internally and externally. If we say that we Enjoy Participation and we Activate Leadership, then having a dirty boring office may challenge this. Refer frequently to the values in talks and speeches, in articles in your website. Acknowledge and thank those members who have achieved something which particularly emphasises OUR VALUES.
2. **Enrol Newbies.** OUR VALUES should be explicitly available as new members join AIESEC. This should be a part of the induction process. Your Local Committee then needs to deliver on the promise that OUR VALUES bring all along!
3. **Revisit and Refresh the understanding of OUR VALUES.** Revisit OUR VALUES periodically - allowing members to refresh their understanding of them. This has the power of enrolling those who have joined AIESEC recently - like Exchange Participants -, and avoids the stated values no longer reflecting the AIESEC culture.
4. **Confront Contradictory Behaviour.** Ensuring that we give feedback to those who don't live out OUR VALUES. If members are allowed to live out contradictory values, then over time there is a clear danger that these will usurp the desired values, particularly if it is the more dynamic, dominant individuals who are espousing the contradictory values.
5. **Periodically Check out with Feedback.** Ask people what they think OUR VALUES are - not only members, who may be influenced by the stated values, but outsiders - partners, advisors, alumni, etc.



## Activating Leadership

*We lead by example and inspire leadership through action and results. We take full responsibility for developing the potential of people.*

The people that we are aiming to develop are our members. Therefore we are aiming to activate leadership in them through an experience that allows for leadership practices in the 'AIESEC EXPERIENCE' like teamwork and development of interpersonal skills.

### Some examples of living this value are:

- ✓ We make sure that through the different AIESEC activities we run at local/national/global level we are offering the opportunity for members to work in international teams and gain international experience.
- ✓ We encourage and delegate responsibility to the new members of AIESEC in managing the organisation.
- ✓ We educate and pass on our experience and learning to the new generations to ensure the long-lasting success of our organization.
- ✓ We provide others with the opportunity to take responsibility and we empower them to do so.
- ✓ We encourage ambition for the organisation.
- ✓ We inspire actions in others by excelling in our role and having committed communication.

## Demonstrating Integrity

*We are consistent and transparent in our decisions and actions. We fulfil our commitments and conduct ourselves in a way that is true to our ideals.*

### Some examples of living this value are:

- ✓ We work together with committed promises and requests
- ✓ We have open and honest communication within ourselves, the organisation, and our stakeholders
- ✓ Our actions back up our words. We fulfil all our responsibilities and promises.

## Living Diversity

*We seek to learn from the different ways of life and opinions represented in our multicultural environment. We respect and actively encourage the contribution of every individual.*

AIESEC needs to assure that there is internationalism and diversity always present in the way that we work. We should always perceive diversity as an enriching factor.

### Some examples of living this value are:

- ✓ Assuring that we are exchanging with different parts of the world and that we are ensuring full usage of the diversity that we have in the organisation.
- ✓ Assuring that the students we recruit and the companies / organisations we partner with open up to a diverse and international experience. Target these kinds of organisations and students.
- ✓ Co-operating with other AIESEC offices by transferring your knowledge and resources as an investment to increase their capacity to provide complete AIESEC Experiences and contribute to society
- ✓ Interacting with delegates from a large range of countries at international conferences.

## Enjoying Participation

*We create a dynamic environment by active and enthusiastic participation of individuals. We enjoy being involved in AIESEC.*

### Some examples of living this value are:

- ✓ We foster the participation of different stakeholders and members in the AIESEC Experiences we provide as a way to enhance leadership development in our programs
- ✓ We assure that more individuals will have the opportunity to participate in AIESEC activities by targeting and delivering high quality activities
- ✓ We work together and enjoy what we are doing therefore we get the best out of each individual and we reach higher results.
- ✓ We are proactive.
- ✓ We celebrate our victories, share our achievements and recognise our contributions.

## Striving for Excellence

*We aim to deliver the highest quality performance in everything we do. Through creativity and innovation we seek to continuously improve.*

### Some examples of living this value are:

- ✓ We constantly look for improvements in the way that we run AIESEC to improve the way that we deliver our role and satisfy our stakeholders.
- ✓ We deliver what we promise, run complete AIESEC Experiences, and never sacrifice the learning of the individuals that we are aiming to develop, as it is our end goal.
- ✓ We use the added value of each individual and get feedback from the team to achieve higher results.
- ✓ We encourage each other to be better every day in everything we do.
- ✓ We approach our work with innovation and creativity for achieving better results.

## Acting Sustainably

*We act in a way that is sustainable for our organisation and society.*

*Our decisions take into account the needs of future generations.*

### Some examples of living this value are:

- ✓ We manage our resources in a way that we leave the best conditions for the organization for future years.
- ✓ We aim to ensure maximum financial sustainability after assuring a high level of quality. Our end goal is the impact and not the revenues.
- ✓ We aim to foster an attitude of respect for the future generations throughout the complete AIESEC Experiences we provide.
- ✓ We support each other and we build on what has been done in the past to ensure continuity.
- ✓ We think and plan for the long term.
- ✓ We plan to focus our efforts in only that which we can achieve.
- ✓ We consider the environment in the use of natural resources in our offices worldwide.



## Section 3: Evolution of The AIESEC Way

It is usual and healthy for an organization to revisit and revise its description and ideals over the years. This is essential to adapt to the continuously changing environment and society. Indeed, AIESEC has discussed its description and ideals many times over the course of its history.

As a result of these discussions, who we are and what we do statements have been revised several times to best represent the relevance of our organization in that given period of time. Below, you can find how [THE AIESEC WAY](#) has evolved through the years of its existence.

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### **AIESEC in 1948:**

“AIESEC is an independent, non political and international association, which has as its purpose, to establish and promote friendly relations between the members. The function of the members is to supply information of study conditions, arrange trainee exchanges, provide contacts and other facilities for student s visitors and undertake exchange visits for students”

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### **AIESEC in 1964:**

“The aim of the association shall be carried out by the members arranging trainee exchanges, and providing contacts and other facilities for student visitors, and undertaking exchange visits of students”

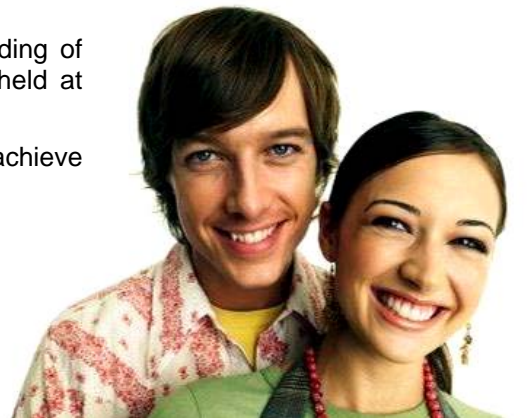
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### **AIESEC in 1978:**

“AIESEC shall be an independent, non-political, non-profit international association of scientific character, whose purpose shall be to develop internationally educated management which can effect various economic environments”

### **TO THIS END AIESEC:**

- ✓ Believes in finest quality as an approach towards all activities
- ✓ Shall build bridges between management, academic and student communities
- ✓ Shall promote international understanding, goodwill and empathy for different management attitudes.
- ✓ Shall complement a management and economic education with international educational programmes, which provide practical experiences in management, without discrimination and insights into the economic, political and a social environment in which management operates.
- ✓ Shall provide students with a better understanding of societies actual problems throughout projects held at national and inter-nation al level.
- ✓ Shall offer a challenge to AIESEC members to achieve the aims of the association.



### **AIESEC in 1989:**

**VISION:** Peace and fulfilment of humankind's potential

**PURPOSE:** To contribute to the development of our countries and their people with an overriding commitment to international understanding and co-operation.

**Means:**

- ✓ Creating opportunities for exposure and interaction between young people of different cultures and nations
- ✓ Assisting people in acquiring skills and knowledge through management education and practical experience.
- ✓ Offering people the opportunity to interact with their social and economic environment at national and inter-national level.
- ✓ Shall offer a challenge to AIESEC members to achieve the aims of the association.

### **AIESEC in 1999:**

In 1992 AIESEC created its first long term organizational plan. It was called **DIRECTION '96**. This long term intent ended at IC 1996 in Poland when the organization decided to completely focus its efforts in exchange activities.

However, the lack of a consistent plan to integrate and align all member committees resulted in a situation of confusion and lack of results across the network.

In 1998 AIESEC International decides to work together with the **RAE Group** in order to create a framework that will allow the organization to focus efforts with a long term perspective.

As results of the joint work with the RAE Group, at IPM 1999 in Taiwan a new framework for the description of AIESEC and its ideals is launched. This description of the organization and its ideals was also responsible for the long term vision initiative that one year later was called AIESEC 2005 and included as well a definition and agreement upon the **values** of the organization; however the process of defining and agreeing upon those values was planned to be done later.

The denomination of the framework used to refer to **THE AIESEC WAY** at that time is property of the RAE Group; for such reason the titles of the statements have been replaced with the ones that comprise **THE AIESEC WAY** framework.

**WHAT WE ENVISION:** Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential.

**OUR IMPACT:** By developing individuals, we contribute to the development of our communities with an overriding commitment to international co-operation and understanding.

**THE WAY WE DO IT:** AIESEC facilitates international traineeship exchanges and supporting activities that provide practical learning experiences for our trainees and that facilitate the learning of our members and other stakeholders.

- ✓ AIESEC offers an International Traineeship Exchange Program<sup>4</sup> that is supported by learning activities in a flow that is comprised by recruitment/selection, preparation, reception/integration and reintegration.
- ✓ AIESEC members mainly run the process for other university students. Few AIESEC members participate of the International Traineeship Exchange Program.
- ✓ Trainees (participants of the ITEP) are seen by the organization as the main delivery to our communities in order to achieve our vision.
- ✓ Our members are just the engine that makes the process happen and not necessarily participants of the process itself.

<sup>4</sup> ITEP: International Traineeship Exchange Program.

### **AIESEC in 2000:**

We updated **OUR IMPACT** and **THE WAY WE DO IT** statements at IPM 1999, however, we also needed to revisit and refresh other components of our organizational description and ideals – namely the values and principles that will guide our actions and operation as an organisation. This next step - refreshing our values - was necessary to make us more conscious about our actions, decisions, and ways of working with each other as one global association.

At International Congress 1999 in South Africa we run through the process for doing this and also explore what we needed to do to utilise our common global organizational description and ideals to increase our profile, impact, and results. At that moment we were no longer at the point of debating who we were as an organisation and the challenge that we had in front of us is to act upon that agreement and to reach the goals and results that we all envisioned.

By completing the refreshment process of our organizational description and ideals – through agreeing upon **OUR VALUES** and simplifying **THE WAY WE DO IT** statement – IPM 2000 was a historical event in which the whole organisation confirmed its commitment by legislating the complete framework. This refreshed framework will guide how the organisation is positioned internally and externally and how each member and entity in AIESEC acts in society until the latest refreshment at IC 2005 in India.

**WHAT WE ENVISION:** Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential.

**OUR IMPACT:** By developing individuals, we contribute to the development of our communities with an overriding commitment to international co-operation and understanding.

**THE WAY WE DO IT:** AIESEC facilitates international traineeship exchanges and supporting activities that provide practical learning experiences for our trainees and that facilitate the learning of our members and other stakeholders.

#### **OUR VALUES:**

- ✓ **Activating Leadership**  
We lead by example and inspire leadership through action and results. We take full responsibility for our role in developing the potential of people.
- ✓ **Demonstrating Integrity**  
We are consistent and transparent in our decisions and actions. We fulfil our commitments and conduct ourselves in a way that is true to our identity.
- ✓ **Living Diversity**  
We seek to learn from the different ways of life and opinions represented in our multicultural environment. We respect and actively encourage the contribution of every individual.
- ✓ **Enjoying participation**  
We create a dynamic environment by active and enthusiastic participation of individuals. We enjoy being involved in AIESEC.
- ✓ **Striving for Excellence**  
We aim to deliver the highest quality performance in everything we do. Through creativity and innovation we seek to continuously improve.
- ✓ **Acting Sustainably**  
We act in a way that is sustainable for our organisation and society. Our decisions take into account the needs of future generations.



### **AIESEC in 2005: MOST RECENT REVISION OF THE AIESEC WAY CONTENT**

The most recent global discussion about revising **THE AIESEC WAY** content started in 2004 and resulted with the refreshment of our organizational description and ideals in the International Congress 2005 in Agra - India.

The definition of the '**AIESEC Experience**' in 2002, as a result of the Global Change Process initiated by the creation of AIESEC 2005 at IC 1999 in South Africa, helped us to revisit the questions of what we are, what we do and who our primary target group is. After a long time of different viewpoints, it symbolised increased unity and common vision among the membership of the organisation and a clear link to contribute to the achievement of our vision.

After the common agreement of the organization to implement the '**AIESEC Experience**' at IPM 2004 in Sri Lanka, we realized that our organizational description and ideals were no longer an accurate representation of who we are and what we do. Formal discussion started to happen around **THE AIESEC WAY** changes in the organization at that point, including AIESEC International discussions, Steering Team meetings and MCPs participation at the International Congress 2004 and International Presidents Meeting 2005 as well as participation of MCVPs at the Expros 2005.

During those discussions it was realised that the organisation's description and ideals were tied to the former concept of AIESEC as an organization that provide a service to university students and indirect service to society by providing it with capable Agents of Change without considering the formal development of its members as those Change Agents. The '**AIESEC EXPERIENCE**' aims to transform the organization to an entity that provides these opportunities to all its members – this needed to be reflected in **THE AIESEC WAY** statements. As well, the fact that AIESEC contributes to the achievement of **WHAT WE ENVISION** for the world by providing leadership for a positive impact on society was not clear.

#### **By re-discussing THE AIESEC WAY, it was aimed to:**

- ✓ Provide simplicity and clarity to help members better understand AIESEC and its organizational description and ideals globally.
- ✓ Facilitate internal and external communication to create one common image/message around the world.
- ✓ Reflect the evolution of the organization itself after the Global Change Process that brought the '**AIESEC Experience**' as the essence of what we do stated in **THE WAY WE DO IT**.
- ✓ Re-enforce who we are and what we do.

### **AIESEC in 2007: MOST RECENT REVISION OF THE AIESEC WAY FRAMEWORK**

Since the changes made to our organizational description and ideals with the support of the RAE Group during 1999 and 2000 we have been using a framework of their property.

In order to recognize the property of the framework by this consultancy company and find our own way of calling our organizational description and ideals, Dianna Old from the RAE Group supported us in the process of defining a framework that meets more the current needs of AIESEC.

Is in this context how **THE AIESEC WAY** was born.

**THE AIESEC WAY** describes not only AIESEC and its ideals, also states that this is **our way** to contribute to create the world we envision; this is **our way** to make a positive impact on society. It help us to differentiate ourselves even more from other organizations.

**THE AIESEC WAY** framework also states the *Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential* is **WHAT WE ENVISION** for the world. This will help us differentiate the role this statement plays in comparison with our **AIESEC 2010** organizational vision, which is the vision we have for our AIESEC in 2010.

**OUR IMPACT** statement reflects the **way** in which we see ourselves as organization making a contribution to the world by providing leadership for a positive impact on society.

**THE WAY WE DO IT** states the **way** (*manner and path*) we have chosen as organization to make the impact possible.



Following is The AIESEC Way current statements (left column) alongside the former concepts we were using (right column).

THE AIESEC WAY – Current Version	THE AIESEC WAY - prior to IC '05
<p><b>WHAT IS AIESEC?:</b> AIESEC is a global, non-political, independent, not-for-profit organization run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education. Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management. AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, creed, religion, national, ethnic or social origin.</p> <p><b>WHAT WE ENVISION (no changes)</b> Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential.</p> <p><b>OUR IMPACT</b> Our international platform enables young people to discover and develop their potential to provide leadership for a positive impact on society.</p> <p><b>THE WAY WE DO IT</b> AIESEC provides its members with an integrated development experience comprised of leadership opportunities, international internships and participation in a global learning environment.</p> <p><b>OUR VALUES (no changes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Activating Leadership</li> <li>✓ Demonstrating Integrity</li> <li>✓ Living Diversity</li> <li>✓ Enjoying Participation</li> <li>✓ Striving for Excellence</li> <li>✓ Acting Sustainably</li> </ul>	<p>AIESEC is an international, non-political, non-profit, student-run, independent, educational foundation. It is comprised of students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education who are interested in economics and management. AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, colours, sex, sexual orientation, creed, Religion, national or ethnic origin.</p> <p>Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential.</p> <p>By developing individuals, we contribute to the development of our communities with an overriding commitment to international co-operation and understanding.</p> <p>AIESEC facilitates international traineeship exchanges and supporting activities that provide practical learning experiences for our trainees and that facilitate the learning of our members and other stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Activating Leadership</li> <li>✓ Demonstrating Integrity</li> <li>✓ Living Diversity</li> <li>✓ Enjoying Participation</li> <li>✓ Striving for Excellence</li> <li>✓ Acting Sustainably</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1:

### Main differences in [OUR IMPACT](#) and [THE WAY WE DO IT](#) statements after the 2005 Identity refreshment

#### 1. Changes in [OUR IMPACT](#) Statement:

In the previous [OUR IMPACT](#) statement we declared that **'by developing individuals, we contribute to the development of our communities with an overriding commitment to international co-operation and understanding'**; making clear that the main purpose of our activities was to provide the world with individuals able to foster international co-operation and understanding as the **way** to achieve our vision.

At that time, the statement identified the organisation's contribution at both a societal and also an individual level.

It no longer states that AIESEC develops individuals, but rather that AIESEC **enables** them to discover and develop their potential (**'by developing individuals'**). This is due to our higher understating of what the impact of AIESEC is in the world, and the need to empower people to experience a self-driven development process that is supported by the opportunities that AIESEC provides.

Today AIESEC's contribution is definitely made through indirect impact. The impact of our activities is focused on leadership development in young people rather than in direct impact of our activities in society.

The evolution of our organization to meet the external reality lead AIESEC to define the AIESEC EXPERIENCE as a tool to enable young people to discover and develop their potential to make a positive impact in society, an impact that can not be limited to **'international co-operation and understanding'** but rather open to different scopes and wider reach.

AIESEC wants to enable young people to become leaders able to make positive impact in diverse global issues (HIV/AIDS, finances, energy, entrepreneurship, poverty, discrimination, international co-operation and understanding, etc). This is also currently stated in the [WHAT IS AIESEC?](#) statement.

The risk of loosing the international nature of our activities is diminished by two facts: the presence of the **'world issues'** interest declared in the [WHAT IS AIESEC?](#) statement and the presence of the subject **'our international platform'** in [OUR IMPACT](#) statement itself.

**'World issues'** is extensively explained in the [WHAT IS AIESEC?](#) part of this toolkit.

**'Our international platform'** phrase in [OUR IMPACT](#) states clearly that AIESEC is that international platform on which thousands of AIESEC Experiences are happening everyday, connecting people globally through our **'global learning environment'**.

The change from 'communities' to **'society'** is due to the fact that society holds a wider range. We are talking about all sectors of society – corporate, non-corporate, government, social, etc – while in most cases 'community development' is more connected with social development at local level. Society is also open to be a cross borders concept more that just a local impact concept.

Finally, our commitment is no longer purely based on international co-operation and understanding, but on a **positive impact in society**. This includes international co-operation and understanding and gives open space for other relevant global issues that shape our world today and in the incoming future.



## 2. Changes in THE WAY WE DO IT Statement:

By stating that ‘AIESEC facilitates international traineeship exchanges and supporting activities that provide practical learning experiences for our trainees and that facilitates the learning of our members and other stakeholders’, we clearly defined that the essence of our activities was the international traineeship exchanges. The ‘supporting activities’ as the name itself declares, were a ‘support’ tool for the exchanges themselves.

In the new statement, AIESEC provides an **integrated development experience** (AIESEC EXPERIENCE). This experience is ‘**comprised**’ of the three key elements:

1. *leadership opportunities,*
2. *international internships and*
3. *participation in a global learning environment,*

giving an ambition to the organization by committing us to deliver as many ‘complete’ AIESEC EXPERIENCES as possible by increasing the number of our international internships as well as the number of leadership opportunities provided to our members, and ensuring the existence of the elements of the learning environment in each one of our local committees worldwide.

In the new statement there is no distinction between members and trainees. The organization is talking in terms of ‘AIESEC people’ in its organizational description and ideals, giving the ambition to ensure that we are building generations of ‘AIESEC Experience people’ for a future in which most of our interns have been AIESEC members for a period of time and most of them have been given with the opportunity to take on a leadership role within the organization.

The new statement reflects clearly what we do in every local committee: **AIESEC provides as many complete AIESEC Experiences as possible to make a positive impact on society.**

### POINTS TO NOTE

1. The integrated development experiences (AIESEC EXPERIENCES) provided by AIESEC are comprised of the three elements mentioned – **leadership opportunities, international internships** and participation in a **global learning environment** – we need to strive to provide as many **complete** AIESEC Experiences as possible by providing more and more leadership opportunities and international internships and ensuring that the **six elements of the learning environment** are present and delivered in all our local committees.
2. This means that providing only international internships or leadership opportunities is not sufficient. Along with the internships and the leadership role, the presence of the six elements of the learning environment in every local committee is the unique **way** for AIESEC to provide complete AIESEC Experiences.
3. We believe that by providing **complete** AIESEC Experiences, AIESEC then impacts youth to become those leaders able to make a positive impact in society.

