

Education in PR: 15 years of the international PR-Project GlobCom

ZEISS experiences a record number of participants in the PR-Fight against the “Vision Crisis”

Erfurt/Jena/Bangalore, 4th of June 2017 – Up to 2,5 billion people worldwide need a vision aid but do not have the access to it. Each year, this number grows around a further 50 million – with the strongest growth in developing countries. On behalf of the company ZEISS, more than 200 students from 15 countries on five continents are now presenting PR-strategies, which are supposed to help finding a solution to the so called “vision crisis”, in Bangalore, India. This high number is a record of participants, taking part in the international Project “GlobCom”, which was founded 15 years ago. Germany is represented by 22 students from the University of Erfurt.

“Without good vision, no one can learn or build a successful life”, says Volker Stoltz, founder of the “GlobCom” project and president of the Global Institute e.V. “We are happy, that with this problem ZEISS assigned the students from 15 different countries with an especially relevant task in the anniversary year. This PR-Project is giving the students the one and only chance to learn not just the tools for successful PR but also to discover intercultural competence and gain experiences in the management of international projects – abilities, which are getting more and more important in our global world.”

This year, nine different teams, which are working together as virtual international PR-agencies from the USA to Australia, received the task from ZEISS to work out a creative global PR-concept which presents a solution to the so called “Vision Crisis”. This crisis is a widespread problem in developing countries, which is quite unknown in the global community and especially in industrialized countries. Untreated vision impairment is an important obstacle which stands in the way of getting educated and successful. The problem is not the lack of affordable vision aids but the lack of knowledge, how to fit them individually plus the logistic possibilities to reach the people in rural regions of India. Therefore, ZEISS aims to solve this problem. The 200 students are supposed to develop ideas regarding how ZEISS can come a solution a little bit closer with the help of global communication. The students will compete for the virtual award of the GlobCom partner ZEISS in front of an international jury in Bangalore, India, in a several-stepped pitch, for which the teams will get prepared in intensive mentoring-session on location.

“According to WHO, better vision everywhere, where it is missing now, would help increase the worldwide wealth each year about storming 270 Milliard US-Dollar”, says Daniel Silberhorn, lecturer for Global Communications at the University of Erfurt and consulter at the international PR-agency FleishmanHillard. “Like this, the participants of GlobCom are applying their theoretical knowledge directly for a societal relevant PR-exercise – doing this also with a unique global context. This is a great chance, to acquire important abilities plus getting to know different cultures in their daily working life, which a lot of career starters are not experiencing for years. Additionally, friendships are being built – the ones, which do not know boundaries. And all of this in a time, in which a lot of countries are experiencing a strengthening of nationalistic thoughts. PR, that connects – globally.”

GlobCom is taking place for the 15th time this year. It was created in 2002 by Dr. Volker Stoltz, a co-founder of the “Gesellschaft Public Relations Agenturen” (GPRA). Since that, GlobCom gives the students of communications science at the University of Erfurt, the chance to transfer the theoretical knowledge in global PR-practice. An important idea behind the project is to sensitize PR-students for cultural differences and teach them the handling of modern communication tools in the working world.

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