



Fortis successfully added an innovative chapter to the organizational CSR policy which connects the corporate social mission to core business and customer relations. The Fortis Future Leaders program provides a leadership development track for talented students from all over the world. Under direction and guidance of well-established Fortis clients and Better Future professionals, the future leaders work on sustainable development projects in countries like Ecuador and Tanzania. Fortis makes good on the promise of ‘getting you there’.

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The Future Leaders program is a unique instrument for Fortis to realize CSR goals. Dedicated to making a sustainable impact in local communities and taking responsibility for the well-being of future generations, Fortis chose to raise a guild of compassionate leaders who are committed to make a change for the better.

Twenty students at a time are coupled to work in teams on local business cases. In the Gambia for example, a Future Leader team worked with local market women on entrepreneurial skills inducing higher profits. In Ecuador a project geared up the ‘Environmental Super Agency’ which engages school children in an awareness campaign on environmental preservation. A project in Tanzania brought about ‘Youth at Work’, a youth group which already deployed 15 high-school drop-outs in local companies.

Each successful project, however small, has its own snowball effect within local communities. Entrepreneurial activation undeniably leads to transformation processes within people and affects their environment.

Fortis made a conscious choice to engage clients in the Future Leaders program. With appreciation for the vast business knowledge and hands-on experience among clients, Better Future foresaw a multiplying effect when established account holders would share their know-how with young talent.

Fortis clients are invited to participate in the parallel Business Leaders program –on their own dime in all fairness– and be part of a unique life-changing event. “An experience to never forget,” according to Chris Steketee, Business Leader Ecuador.

A pleasant circumstance is the new frame of reference for customer relations. Clients and prospects have a chance to see Fortis from a different angle. For a full week, bank managers and clients work side by side in unaccustomed surroundings aiming to guide young leaders to become the best they can be. It deepens the bond to a point that goes beyond traditional banker-client relations.

The program also channels the possibility to co-create with clients in order to reach sustainable results. The experience in a developing country often inspires new ideas for poverty relief in which both parties can take up their role. Ultimately, Fortis going the extra mile in an effort to secure future generations takes customer engagement and client loyalty to the next level. “I congratulate Fortis on this unique initiative and I have deep respect for the excellent execution of this venture in a better future,” Matti Emondts wrote in his thank-you note upon return from the Business Leaders program in Tanzania.

When summing up the benefits of the Future Leaders program, the area of corporate social impact with regard to company pride should not be forgotten. The program’s accomplishments are the pride and joy of the organization. Last season’s greetings were accompanied by a special publication dedicated to the Future Leaders program. While it’s more common for a bank to go for a 100% ROI (return on investments), Fortis proudly announced 100% Return on Inspiration.

The program takes customer engagement beyond traditional banker-client relations