COVID-19: KEDGE releases €100k from its emergency fund for students in highly precarious positions

The lockdown ordered by France and many other countries to tackle the spread of COVID-19 has hit some students extremely hard, putting them in highly precarious positions essentially overnight. In response to this unprecedented situation, KEDGE has decided to take extraordinary action by releasing €100k from its emergency funds to help students facing significant financial difficulties relating to the health crisis.

KEDGE is committed to showing solidarity with its students and ensuring their well-being, and has had an emergency fund for students experiencing great hardship in place for a number of years. With €20k typically donated to it each year, that fund has already been almost completely used up this year.

Thanks to the efforts and generosity of the KEDGE Foundation, however, the emergency fund has recently received an additional €50k in donations. The School subsequently decided to follow this show of solidarity by matching the Foundation’s efforts like for like and donating another €50k to the fund, meaning a total of €100k will be used to provide financial support to KEDGE students who find themselves in highly precarious positions as a result of the crisis.

For KEDGE General Secretary Céline Claverie, "the common good is one of our strategic priorities. It is in the School's DNA, and it was therefore unthinkable that we would fail to help our most disadvantaged students in the face of this unprecedented health and economic crisis".

KEDGE will be reviewing each student's individual circumstances in light of the COVID-19 crisis, including termination of their internship agreements or work contracts, accommodation issues, financial difficulties experienced by funding providers, issues relating to expatriation, and so on. These detailed analyses of the social, financial and family circumstances of students approaching our teams will enable us to grant them ad hoc assistance in a bid to make life slightly easier for KEDGE students during this time, whilst also maintaining close links and tailored support.

Teams of volunteer employees and psychologists from the Wellness scheme (the School's guidance and mental support scheme) have also been called upon to assist students who are experiencing difficulties in this unprecedented lockdown period with kindness and empathy, helping them tackle isolation and inactivity, prevent anxiety, adapt to remote student life, etc.

Following decisions by the French President to close higher education institutions and implement a lockdown, KEDGE immediately took the necessary steps to comply with legal requirements and protect both students and colleagues, whilst also putting business continuity plans in place. On 16 March, the School closed to students and staff began working remotely. Classes from Monday 16 to Saturday 21 March were cancelled to allow students to travel to where they would spend the lockdown, and give staff time to finalise digital content uploads. Faculty staff, teaching and administrative teams all worked remotely to digitise class content for students, enhancing and boosting the existing system for digitising teaching materials in the process.

Classes resumed as normal, albeit remotely, on Monday 23 March via LEARN, the distance learning platform already used by the School for teachers to give their classes, share their materials with students, and answer questions. This system proved to be a great success, with no less than 5,000 teaching sessions delivered in a single week.

Every day, more than 5,000 students have been able to return to school online in reasonable conditions every day. Teaching staff are reporting that attendance levels in some cases are even better than in face-to-face classes. The past two weeks have seen a giant step forward in getting to grips with online classes. It has also presented faculty staff with an opportunity to review their teaching practices, with high-quality discussions taking place between teachers and students via a screen that have occasionally even turned into real instances of "virtual happiness".

KEDGE had prepared this Business Continuity Plan ahead of time in case the epidemic progressed, which explains why this transformation has been so successful. Alongside tuition, exams and graduation
have also been adapted to reflect the exceptional circumstances that France and many other countries are currently getting to grips with, so as to limit the lockdown’s impact on the student experience as much as possible.

The School’s response to this unparalleled crisis is a comprehensive one, going above and beyond scheduling remote learning sessions. Its aim is to coordinate the entire national and international community so that all aspects of student life may continue to run smoothly, and ensure students can continue their courses in the best conditions while institutions remain closed, all whilst prioritising actions to keep everyone healthy and show solidarity with those in the most precarious of positions.

About the KEDGE Foundation:
The “KEDGE Business School Foundation for Responsible Management”, under the auspices of the Fondation de France, aims to promote access to higher education and, with support from businesses, foundations and private individuals, to contribute to training efficient and responsible managers. It is also involved in research development and guarantees the quality of KEDGE’s programmes and areas of expertise, boosting its reach and reputation in the process. It has raised €3 million, awarded 180 social grants and 30 entrepreneurial grants, supported 248 students via the wellness scheme, and funded 10 research chairs.
The foundation is supported by: Adecco, AGIP, ALTARES, APHEC, AXA, BNP, Bosch, Bouygues, C3D, Caisse d’épargne/CEPAC, Caisse des dépôts, Campus Véolia, CIS, Cora, Degetel, ED BOISBAUDRY, EDF, Eurocopter, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, FROMARSAC, GIF, GROUPE PICHERT, HIGH CO, HILTI, Kinnarps, KPMG, Kurt Salmon, LA BANQUE POSTALE, LA POSTE, La Varappe, LECTRA, L’OCCITANE, LVMH, ONET, ORANGE, PERNOD RICARD, Saur, Sefacil, SEPHORA, SMC, SOCIETE GENERALE, Sodexo, UNION MOUSQUETAIRES, Veolia Environnement, VW.

About KEDGE Business School:
KEDGE Business School is a benchmark French business school with 4 campuses in France (Paris, Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Toulon), 3 overseas (2 in China, in Shanghai and Suzhou, and 1 in Africa in Dakar) and 3 partner campuses (Avignon, Bastia and Bayonne). The KEDGE community is made up of 14,800 students (25% of whom are international students), 192 full-time lecturers (44% of whom are international), 291 international academic partners and 70,000 alumni around the world. KEDGE offers a portfolio of 36 training programmes in management and design for students and industry professionals. It also provides customised educational programmes for businesses at national and international levels. KEDGE is AACSB-, EQUIS- and AMBA-accredited, and is a member of the Conférence des Grandes Ecoles. It is also recognised by the French government, with covered programmes, and has obtained the EESPIG label. KEDGE is ranked 31st by the Financial Times in the European Business School rankings and 39th globally for its Executive MBA.
kedge.edu - @kedgebs - Facebook/Kedgebs

KEDGE Press Contacts:
Julien Ravier Tel. +33 (0) 671 535 161 / julien.ravier@kedgebs.com
Titiane Lugand Tel. +33 (0) 556 846 343 / titiane.lugand@kedgebs.com
Aurélie Prouillac Tel. +33 (0) 556 845 509 / aurelie.prouillac@kedgebs.com
Kimberley Borg Tel. +33 (0) 603 343 316 / kimberley.borg@kedgebs.com