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WORKSHOP :

***« BEST PRACTICES IN INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT:
REACHING THE RIGHT STUDENTS IN THE RIGHT WAY »***

“ HOW ISCAE GROUP RECRUITS OVERSEAS STUDENTS ”

**PROFESSEUR RACHID M'RABET
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ISCAE GROUP**

University of Economics. Prague, (VSE)

How the ISCAE Group recruits overseas students?

The “Groupe Institut Supérieur de Commerce et d’Administration des Entreprises”, more commonly known as ISCAE Group, **is a public institution supervised by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and New Technologies. Created in 1971**, it was the first School of Management in Morocco and has been the best since then. It has trained more than 10000 executives in the undergraduate and **post graduate programs** as well as in the in service training programs. These hold high positions in all economic and financial public and private sectors.

The group offers a wide range of programs in management. The undergraduate program is offered by the “Grande Ecole”¹. Graduates can go on to specialize in one of the management areas and get a specialized Master. The Group offers 10 specialized Masters half of which are in partnership with renowned International institutions². The Group is the only establishment in Morocco that offers a training program in chartered accountancy³.

Another program offered to managers and high executives, holders of a degree plus at least 10 year experience, is the Executive MBA.

In addition, the Executive Education programs give managers the possibility to widen their knowledge and acquire new competences in a specific area in management. Courses can be delivered at ISCAE or on company sites.

Following its development strategy, starting this year, the Group has launched its doctoral cycle which will train experts, consultants, but most importantly trainers in management that our country highly needs. The group will be the only institution delivering doctorates in Morocco.

The “Grande Ecole” program lasts for 3 years. The first year is equivalent to a first degree, **i.e.** 3 years of study after the baccalaureate.

The second and third years correspond to M1 and M2 after which students are granted a master degree, after they go through a six month internship as immersion in the professional world.

¹ Dual programs are also possible especially with Rouen Business School.

² Finance, Marketing, HR, Sport Management, Management of cities and territories, Public Management, International Business, Business Law, Purchasing and Logistics.

³ Almost 50% of Moroccan Chartered Accountants are graduates of ISCAE Group.

Students get access to the “Grande Ecole” after passing the entrance exam. There are two types of exams:

- One that gives access to the first year of the “Grande Ecole”. For this a minimum of 2 years successfully completed at scientific or commercial preparatory classes, school of management or university, is required. In 2010, 180 students were selected out of 1000 candidates taking the exam⁴.
- One that gives access to the second year of the “Grande Ecole”. For this a minimum of a degree is required and is conditional to places being available.

Who are the overseas students?

The ISCAE Group, like most of Moroccan institutions of higher education, hosts a large number of French speaking overseas students, mostly from Sub Saharan Africa. Morocco has always had multi secular relationships with Black Africa because of the caravans that travelled from Morocco heading for sub Saharan Africa. These relationships that have continued through the years are not only economic, but also artistic and intellectual.

The Moroccan policy has always been to help African people towards their freedom, a mission to which late King Mohamed V contributed greatly. But it is thanks to His Majesty King Mohamed VI, **may god be with him**, that these relationships were reinforced. By travelling himself to some African countries, he has given these relationships a new dimension, a real gain for the continent, followed by new and concrete projects.

Now, cooperation with Sub Saharan Africa is multifold. Morocco provides an important technical assistance especially in the domain of agriculture, hydraulics, urban development, infrastructures, education, banking, new technologies, air and maritime transport and real estate.

The AMCI (Agence Marocaine de Coopération Internationale) which relates to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of Morocco’s African policy. In the education domain, AMCI actions put the human capital first in the Moroccan strategy of South-South cooperation. These actions mainly include the training

⁴ The number admitted to the Institute of Casablanca will increase to 240 next year, which was hired before the new workforce development strategy that was proposed to recruit at bac +2 level instead of the tray. As a result, the number of candidates rose from 10000 to 1000. But this number is expected to increase from year to year, especially with the opening of registration for the Institute of Rabat and again later for the Institute of Fez which is being opened.

of overseas executives, mostly African. More than 7000 students from 35 countries get scholarships from the Moroccan government⁵.

Since its creation, ISCAE Group has trained almost 400 overseas students; mainly from French speaking Sub Sahara, and this represent 5% of the general total of graduates.⁶ The current number of overseas students, **in training**, exceeds 5% of the total student population.

It is important to note that not all foreign students come from overseas. Some of them are resident and took their baccalaureate in Morocco. The behavior and the situation of these latter are generally more similar to those of Moroccan students than those coming from overseas.

However neither foreign students resident in Morocco, nor those coming directly from overseas can get access to the "Grande Ecole" without the AMCI authorization.

ISCAE- GUINEA: Training for overseas students in their country of origin

Finally, establishing the Group overseas is a fundamental aspect which has developed and intends to continue developing. In fact, The ISCAE Group does not yet have a specific strategy for the recruitment of overseas students. However, the Group has a strong will to be present on the international scene. This positioning is reflected in its efforts to reinforce relationships with subsidiaries of the multinational companies that are established in Morocco but also by being present abroad through cooperation in the domains of Education and Research. This how the Group, with the agreement of the Moroccan Government, and in close collaboration with the AMCI, conceived, set up and developed an institute similar to that of ISCAE in Conakry-Guinea in 2002. Each year, the institute produces 100 trained executives who are highly demanded in the private as well as the public

⁵ More than 650 executives from two dozen countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Maghreb, Africa and Europe since 2001 have benefited from training courses and refresher courses of short and medium term in a score of administrative, technical and professional.

⁶ Most of these students are from Senegal (90), Mauritians (50), Guinea (40), NIGER (40), Tunisian (40), IVORY COAST (35), BURKINA FASO (26), MALI (25), BENIN (23), Algerians (20), CONGO (19), Chad (19), Gabon (17), Cameroon (17), Togoese, COMORIANS, Central Africans, Romanians, Egyptians, FRENCH, Bulgarians, DJIBOUTI, or Syrians, Jordanians.

sectors. The success of this experience confirms the choice of the Group and calls for the creation of other Management Schools in Africa.

Criteria and Procedure for the selection of overseas students.

We have to admit, the ISCAE Group does not have a specific strategy for international recruitment. Also, we don't have a special program for international selection. Therefore, recruitment for overseas students is similar to that of Moroccan students. Selection is based on academic excellence with the objective of maintaining our international reputation and attracting students from all over the world.

Actually, selection is done in two stages:

- After the candidates are selected based on their grades, they take a written exam in the same conditions as their Moroccan colleagues. The test evaluates their knowledge in the domain of management;
- If the candidates pass the written part, they are invited to attend an interview with a panel who evaluates their ability to analyze, conceptualize and synthesize. Economic art knowledge and intellectual curiosity as well as a high degree of motivation, are also criteria for selection.

Selection is strong, based on excellence criteria. This is how the group organizes its international selection each year to recruit about 20 foreign students out of a total of 100. The minimum grade for access to the "Grande Ecole" is 12/20. The rate of success is similar to that of Moroccan students.

We have to specify that those foreign students, who manage to pass their entrance exam, are automatically accommodated in the Group's campus where they can also practice sport, music or theatre activities.

Strategy to attract overseas students

Even though the group doesn't have problems filling the groups, the recruitment of foreign students has become crucial. On the one hand the competitive

environment obliges the Group, just like other management schools, to differentiate itself by going international. On the other hand, the presence of foreign students increases the number of “very good students” and is a proof of the good reputation of the Group in Africa and worldwide.

This number is very likely to increase in the future to reach 10%. The presence of these students is a concrete proof of the good reputation of our institution on the African, as well as international level. It is also enriching for our programs. These students bring different cultures and different learning experiences. When they go back to their countries of origin, they are likely to become our ambassadors and future executives who will value studies in Morocco and facilitate partnerships and the development of economic and cultural relationships.

Therefore the strategy that we have developed is on a volunteer basis and will be based on the Group's assets.

Assets which favour international recruitment

Today, the Group has more than 5% of foreign students a majority of whom come from Sub Saharan Africa. As previously said, this proportion is likely to increase to 10% of the total student population. **Some of the attractions are** the extracurricular activities offered by the Group: important associations, many sport activities, a musical school and a choral, theatre activities, parties etc.

Students are also attracted because of the good image that the Group has among the other schools of management in Africa.

Besides, foreign students get a scholarship through the AMCI for a period of between 2 and 7 years and the diploma they get is a state diploma. In addition, visas, work permits, accommodation and infrastructures do not represent real problems.

These foreign students attracted also, because the teaching language is French or in some establishments it is English. In big cities and especially in Casablanca, there are large foreign, mostly African, communities, which facilitates the adaptation of students.

A voluntarist Strategy

Our strategy will rely on many assets, one of which is the web. This is why we are reconstructing our site to include modules of orientation that will help students set up their studies projects.

The other objective is to coordinate our communication actions with the AMCI which is in charge of promoting, the Moroccan offer in terms of higher education abroad. The AMCI uses the educational cooperation programs to attract students and to inform them on Moroccan higher education. In addition to the contact, their website provides information to help students familiarize themselves with the Moroccan system and show them how to get access to the Moroccan higher education.

The third factor is the students' exchange to which the Group pays particular attention. At the moment about 60 students participate in this exchange every year. They study for one semester in the partner institutions : In France, , Rouen Business School, Audiencia Nantes, ESSEC Paris, IC Nancy ; In Belgium, ICHEC Bruxelles ; In The Nertherland, INHolland, Maastricht school of Management ; In Canada, Université Laval ; En China, Nanjing Audit University.

The Group receives about 10 overseas students coming from partner establishments. The Group's objective is to further develop these exchanges which provide not only institutional visibility but also an idea on the level of the students that it trains. This will reinforce the image of The Group overseas and establish its reputation internationally.