

Application for a scholarship of CE Foundation "Mitteleuropa-Stiftung"

Dear Sir or Madam,

my name is Daniel Topolanek and I am currently undertaking the University of St. Gallen's Master in Strategy and International Management, an outstanding degree with a strong focus on responsible and sustainable management. As part of this programme I received the opportunity to follow an MBA at INCAE Business School in Costa Rica, where I currently focus on Sustainability and Marketing as my majors.

Born and raised in Austria, I was fascinated with having a considerable impact on my immediate environment since my early years. I was engaged in the European Youth Parliament during my high school studies, after which I completed a social service at a college for visually impaired and blind students with further complex needs in England for the duration of one year. This valuable experience made me fall in love with NGOs and social enterprises, which is why I founded my University's branch of 180 Degrees Consulting, a branch of the world's largest social impact consultancy, and a branch that won numerous awards and currently helps between eight and ten NGOs and non-profits a year and trains up to 50 student consultants on campus. During my graduate studies in St. Gallen, I was honoured to join the World Economic Forum Global Shapers community, where I fostered my interest in the area of social entrepreneurship. As a first-generation university student, I am proud to have financed all my studies and international experiences solely through scholarships and work placements since I was 15 years old.

My deep interest for social entrepreneurship led me to INCAE and to the expansive field of social entrepreneurship in the region Latin America, where I fell in love with the organisation **Ostional Wildlife Refuge**, an organisation created in 1984 that in agreement with the Costa Rican government maximises the survival rates of baby turtles through a unique agreement, about which you can read more under the following [link](#). As part of my Master programme, I aim to undertake a research project in order to write a thesis that focuses on the unique specificities of this relationship and case of an enterprise in connection with the government. I believe that by using the still very young social entrepreneurship theory and this unique case, I could add considerable insight and contribute to the little theoretical work that has been done in this niche area of social entrepreneurship, namely social entrepreneurship and government engagement in the space of mutual value creation.

As the Ostional beach is located in a very remote part of Costa Rica and around eight hours public commute, it is strongly preferred to be reached by car, as it furthermore cuts the travel time in half and allows me to undertake data collection during my studies. Additionally, there are no accommodations within 10+km of the reserve, as it is a protected space, thus further requiring a car. Additionally, as I have only studied Spanish on the side since the beginning of my studies in September, I would need support from a translator, that could help me with translating interviews and transcribing them in order to write an English thesis. As the research will involve 20+ interviews with government officials, Ostional Wildlife Refuge officials and other stakeholders, extensive travelling and accommodations away from my current accommodation will be involved. However, as I will be able to complete the data collection process throughout my university studies, no further accommodation costs need to be incurred. What follows is an approximate budget that would allow me to undertake this valuable research project, which I am confident will add considerable insight to the field of social entrepreneurship and government engagement in the space of mutual value creation.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Individual Amount</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Transport INCAE – Ostional</i>	Rental Car for a 4-day weekend for 5 times (Data collection, interviews, site visits etc.)	€100/weekend	5	€500
<i>Accommodation</i>	Accommodation in Nosara, 10km from Ostional	€50/night for 2 people (translator & I)	15	€450
<i>Translator</i>	A translator would need to be paid for attending 20+ interviews, plus translating them	€15/hour	100	€1,500
			TOTAL	€ 2,450.-

Given my passion for social entrepreneurship and the continent, I am eager to become one myself. Having fallen in love with the region Latin America and huge potential that exists year, I see myself founding a social enterprise in the region and following my passion to combine business and social impact. Specifically, I am interested in the spaces of waste management, plastic ocean cleaning and meatless food consumption alternatives.

In conclusion, I strongly feel that my research undertaking could add valuable contributions to the emerging theory of social entrepreneurship and mutual value creation in relation to governments. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions. I am looking forward to your decision.

Best,



Daniel Topolanek

Alajuela, 7 December 2019