Dharmalife, ISB, and London Business School collaborate to launch DL Labs

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Dharmalife, a social impact organisation dedicated to empowering rural women through an entrepreneurship-driven livelihood model, has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian School of Business (ISB) and the Wheeler Institute for Business and Development at London Business School (LBS) to establish Dharmalife (DL) Labs at ISB's Hyderabad campus.

DL Labs, co-created with the Wheeler Institute, Siriti, and Accenture, brings together ISB's research depth and policy influence with Dharmalife Labs' extensive last-mile network spanning over 45,000 villages. The Wheeler Institute contributes academic rigour and global research linkages, ensuring that field insights are systematically translated into measurable social and economic impact.

With ISB joining, the partnership aims to strengthen rigorous academic collaboration with field-based evidence, leveraging Dharmalife Labs as a dynamic platform for innovation, social entrepreneurship, and policy engagement that advances inclusive growth. ISB will serve as the academic anchor in India for Dharmalife Labs.

Quote by Gaurav Mehta, DL Labs *:*

As we celebrate 15 years of Dharmalife's impact, our experience shows that when academic rigour and grassroots innovation come together, meaningful impact can happen at scale. With the Indian School of Business joining our long-standing collaboration with the Wheeler Institute at London Business School, we are deepening our ability to learn from evidence and to translate insights into action for millions of people. Welcoming ISB to this partnership marks the next chapter in our shared journey to create profound, lasting change through collective innovation.

Quote by Professor Madan Pillutla, Dean, ISB:

"This initiative builds on the long-term partnership between the Indian School of Business and the London Business School, two globally leading institutions

dedicated to transforming research into lasting real-world impact. By combining their academic strengths, data-driven expertise, and global perspectives, with Dharmalife Lab's deep networks on the ground, the collaboration seeks to create innovative models that inform policy, inspire entrepreneurship, and deliver sustainable outcomes for communities across India".

Quote by Professor Rajesh Chandy, Academic Director, Wheeler Institute at the London Business School:

This partnership demonstrates what can happen when world-class research meets grassroots innovation. Together with global and local partners, we are showing that research-based solutions can scale to reach millions, transforming lives and livelihoods. Our collaboration with Dharmalife and the Indian School of Business builds on the fruits of long-standing relationships, bringing together rigorous research and local innovation. It is a model for how business research can inform practice and have a profound impact on individuals, communities, and the world at large." - Rajesh Chandy, Professor of Marketing at London Business School, Tony and Maureen Wheeler Chair of Entrepreneurship and Co-Academic Director of the Wheeler Institute for Business and Development.

Confluence 2025 featured interactive showcases, awards, and roundtables anchored on several powerful themes: women's economic empowerment, climate resilience, and regeneration. The convening includes an Experience Zone, Keynote Conversations, a Dharmalife Labs Showcase, Society Awards, and Participatory Roundtables — all structured around these themes. The event will bring together leading researchers, policymakers, funders, and entrepreneurs to explore innovative pathways that bridge grassroots insights with global innovation and policy. At the forum, the partners outlined DL Labs' 2030 goals: one million dignified jobs, improved learning for 10 million children, and global coalitions for inclusive, climate-smart growth. These engagements highlight the power of collaboration across academia, business, and policy to accelerate progress toward equitable and sustainable development.

About Dharmalife

Dharmalife (since 2009) is a social sector organisation, dedicated to inclusive progress and positive climate action; focused on women and child development, powering women as change agents augmented by insights, innovation, and technology. Dharmalife advances women's economic freedom, decision-making power, and leadership potential to drive inclusive growth and positive climate action. Women power their overall approach as change leaders. Rural women are chosen from within the community, trained to be change leaders, and equipped with campaigns, tools, and social impact products (such as solar lights, sanitary napkins, and clean cookstoves) to drive social change in their communities. Today, they have a network of over 25,000 women across 45,000+ villages in 15 states, creating social impact in their communities. Armed with equity, learning, opportunity, and leadership, Dharmalife's women leaders can be the catalysts India needs to achieve the SDG goals across gender, livelihood, education, health, and climate.

About the Indian School of Business (ISB)

The Indian School of Business (ISB) is India's highest-ranked business school and features in the top league of several global business school rankings. A vibrant pool of research-oriented resident faculty, robust academic partnerships, a thriving alumni network, the backing of an influential board, and the guidance of the industry's thought leadership have enabled ISB to fast emerge and consolidate itself as a premier global business school that grooms future leaders for India and the world.

About The Wheeler Institute for Business and Development at London Business School (LBS)

The Wheeler Institute harnesses the power of business to tackle the world's most pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. By conducting rigorous research, forging communities of practice, and shaping business education, the Institute seeks to improve lives, livelihoods, and environments, particularly in developing countries and emerging markets.