

Comments by David Murray re. the mini-session on "Being an ethical businessperson and avoiding corruption"

It was both a pleasure and a privilege to be allowed to work for six days with such a group of young people who were fully committed to the task in hand.

My small workshop group studied the ethics of business. Most were from the eastern countries of the continent, and we used a framework of ethical principles derived from some of my previous work in post-communist economies. This does not confine itself to traditional principles of honesty and justice but also identifies a need for people who are self-sacrificial, giving of themselves beyond the call of duty or prospect of direct personal reward, if a nation (or indeed an individual business) is to prosper in the long term.

To many it was a novel concept, at least in the context of business. Concern for others rather than self alone was not something that they expected to hear from a tutor who had spent his life in the business world. However, they not only grappled with it for themselves, but took the discussion beyond the small group to others in the conference.

This was evidenced by the number of young people who had not themselves been in my sessions approaching me with questions, including difficult issues of personal counselling about their own working lives. I was very impressed with the way they took the ideas presented and then tried to work them through into the practicalities of their own situations.

(From an e-mail of Oct. 15, 2008)

The mini-session on "Being an ethical business person and avoiding corruption" was co-led by Mr. Erik Kolstö. The session was divided into a theoretical part and a practical part. Mr. Kolstö contributed to the practical part of the session where the emphasis was on practical examples of ethical dilemmas and behaviour. He shared with the participants from his work career as an executive manager in an European energy company.

During the conference Mr. Kolstö also had some individual mentoring sessions with student delegates regarding real dilemmas and/or future challenges they were going through.