

## SIX DECADES OF ICSB

### FROM NATIONAL US ORIGINS TO GLOBAL PLAYER

Following a 1956 conference on Small Business Management at the University of Colorado, formation of the, at the time, US-based „National Council for Small Business Management Development“ (NCSBMD) took shape in 1957 with selection of a nucleus of officers and an advisory board. Soon after, in 1958, the first By-Laws were adopted and official membership to the Council was introduced in 1961. No one of the early „pioneers“, such as Wilford L. White (after whom the most prestigious award of ICSB should be named later on), D. J. Duncan and W. O. Metcalf (receptient of the first Distinguished Service Award in 1971), probably ever would foresee which journey the Council – surely with ups and downs – would embark upon over the decades to come.

Internal growth and evolution of the organization with yearly conferences in regionally varying parts of the US over nearly two decades led to a first major reorganization effort with, in 1977, officially changing the name from „National Council...“ into today’s „International Council for Small Business“, followed by the adoption (1980) of revised By-Laws including a newly devised board structure which by and large should remain the same over the next three decades.

The first „international“ outreach took place in 1979 with the ICSB conference in Quebec and the respective Canadian Council (CCSBE) becoming the first ICSB affiliate; in consequence, the US organization also was turned into an affiliate being renamed 1981 in the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE), with G. Hills erving as its first president overlapping with his ICSB presidency at the time.

With Bob Brockhaus taking over as ICSB President in 1983, followed by a long tenure for some two decades as Executive Director from his base at St. Louis University, increased efforts toward reaching out for new affiliates on a global scale.

Early on board in 1987 came ICSB-Korea as very active an affiliate (with Yoon-Bae Ouh in 1995 becoming the first ICSB president from the Far East). Also in 1987 ICSB-SA as Southern Africa affiliate (later renamed SAESBA) - still under apartheid and the first member from a developing region – was formed; quite active an organization from the outset (with Klaas Havenga serving as ICSB president in 2001-02, and a well attended World Conference 2004 at Johannesburg). Activities thereafter unfortunately faded away so that SAESBA finally was disaffiliated; efforts toward revival under new leadership thus far have failed.

„Europe“ (ECSB), conceived as a regional affiliate from the very beginning, joined in 1988 with Josef Mugler from the Vienna University of Economics & Business serving as its first president. Under Mugler’s chair and Bruce Kirchhoff as then ICSB president, the first World Conference outside N-America was organized 1991 in Vienna with a record attendance including, for the first time, many participants from Eastern Europe after the Soviet Union’s break-up, lending a special flair to the gathering; over a decade or so to follow ECSB should remain the affiliate with largest membership. Scientific efforts and activities early on led to formation of the yearly RENT („Researchr in Entrepreneurship“) conferences of ECSB, by now in their 28th year, with widely acknowledged scholarly reput all over Europe and beyond.

ICSB’s global outreach, by then, firmly had taken hold with expansion of the organization into further regions, thus: Australia/New Zealand as SEANZ, formed in 1992; so far hosting four World Conferences in 1995, 2000, 2006 and 2012. ICSB-ROC (Taiwan) joined in 1991, remaining quite active (having organized a World Conference in 1991). In 1992 Malaysia came on board, but never

really got into gear and after some years was dissolved. However, in 2014, a new group from Malaysia will present to the Board for re-affiliation.

The Entrepreneurship Forum of Singapore formally became an ICSB affiliate 1994 and organized a World Conference in 1998, yet soon after more and more faded away and finally was disaffiliated; a successful revival under new leadership was undertaken in June 2011 and Singapore has remained an active member ever since with regular Board participation as well. ICSB-Puerto Rico & Caribbean was formed in 1996, with Jose Romaguera and Zulma Qiniones serving as ICSB presidents (2003-04 and 2006-07, respectively); also under their chairmanship two World Conferences were held in 2002 and 2013 in the region, other members over the years remained active on the ICSB-Board; Puerto Ricans further was instrumental in forming an ICSB chapter on Barbados which after some time, however, vanished from the scene. ICSB-Brazil joined as an affiliate in 1998, but never became really produced an active workplan, and thus was finally disaffiliated in 2010; a successful revival under new leadership was undertaken in June 2013 and Brazil is currently an active member of the Board.

Japan had been an ICSB chapter for a number of years but had never acquired enough members to form an affiliate (encountering strong rivalry also internally from ISBC). In 1998, Masayoshi Fukuda, an international venture capitalist, consultant and lecturer at Nihon University, visited the ICSB international office at Saint Louis University and upon his return to Japan, led the Japanese chapter to increase its membership from 22 to 55 and meet the requirements to be approved as an affiliate. Fukuda became the first president of the affiliate. In 2013, a successful revival of the affiliate under new leadership of Professor Itsutomo Mitsui was undertaken in June 2013 and Japan is currently an active member of the Board.

More recent breakthroughs as to broadening ICSB affiliation in hitherto untapped regions came in the Middle East with formation of MCSBE in 2011 in Egypt during critical times of the „Arab spring“and its aftermath; in Argentina, as a center in the wider context of the Mercosur network („Red Pymes Mercosur“) under the active leadership of now ICSB president-elect Ruben Ascuá; finally, quite important and promising ICSB-PRC of China, affiliated since June 2010; further ICSB-India (in June 2012) as well as, most recently in 2013, ICSB-Russia as a chapter at first, and ICSB Brazil as an affiliate „re-entry“, following the earlier one mentioned above, under now new organizational auspices, initiatives and leadership.

All in all, ICSB in 2013/14 is registering a record number of 13 affiliates and 2 chapters, with 3 more proposals under immediate consideration and further 6 in various stages of processing.

ICSB also has a long history of internationally recognized publications; above all, The Journal of Small Business Management (JSBM), a quarterly first published in 1963 and soon attaining wide spread distribution as the very first English speaking academic journal in its field. There were ups and downs over the years under varying editorships, until under the able stewardship of Sandra King-Kauanui (ICSB president 2004-05) full ICSB ownership of the Journal was established with Blackwell as the new publisher and distributor. Following such consolidation, a complete and ambitious relaunch of the Journal was undertaken in 2008 with George Solomon as new editor and strong support from ICSB's International Office, quickly reassuming both scientific knowledge and standing as well as enhanced market position: with an acceptance rate currently of 6%, the Journal now reaches well over 3,700 institutions worldwide, enjoys a renewal rate of 94% and an increase of text downloads in 2013 of nearly 30% - a truly remarkable record! A more regular „Bulletin“ informed members, affiliates, practitioners and others on current ICSB related issues and events (for some time now in electronic form in the context of a well designed ICSB website). Special SME related studies and volumes by individual members also appeared under the

ICSB flag; to mention here, in particular, the representative collection „Keystones of Entrepreneurship Knowledge“ (edited on the occasion of ICSB’s 50th anniversary in 2005 by R. v. d. Horst, S. King-Kauanui and S. Duffy) as a kind of state of the art reflection on entrepreneurship research.

Such continuous outreach and broadening of activities in recent years, needless to say, entailed necessary organizational measures, administrative adaptations and support in order to cope with current tasks as well as forward looking future challenges. It is against this background that over the last decade or so important steps, activities and decisions had to be taken; among those to highlight, in particular:

- Setting up an Executive Committee to prepare and streamline ICSB board agendas and related decisions.
- Properly staffing and strengthening ICSB’s International Office to effectively meet with steadily growing tasks and widening terms of reference, including getting office premises housed (in 2008) on a long term contractual basis with George Washington University, Washington D.C., as ICSB’s permanent address and center; quite a feat in itself!
- Adaptation of By-Laws in accordance with changing administrative, organizational and legal requirements.
- Broadening financial resources by way of enhanced sponsorship and networking with global reach.
- Laying the groundwork in this context too, under the able guidance of Dale Meyer, toward the establishment of an ICSB Foundation with a view to enhance and bolster ICSB’s finances over the long run for project and objectives of international concern and outreach.
- Establishing a new, more effective Board structure for decision making (as decided at the AGM of 2013) in taking cognizance of growing affiliate members with diverse patterns and membership potential.
- Finally, designing a „Vision and Strategy“ as a future oriented policy tool and guidance for ICSB’s activities, direction and objectives in the long run.

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