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### **Tell us about LEADER's early history.**

So the idea for LEADER really started with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. An East German Ambassador came to Ivey to speak in the auditorium about the problems that the East would face with the transition to a market economy. These had already emerged as a result of big policy shifts like Glasnost and the like. I was sitting with the other founding team members, Scott and Paul. We thought, if the Germans were going to have problems 40 years out of a market economy, the Russians will have enormous problems 70 years out of the Soviet system. We started in Moscow at the Moscow State University, School of Management.

### **What materials did you work with?**

I was a Business O2O teacher for two years (now known as the Business 1220, introductory business course at Western). We started with the original Ivey framework and then stripped it down for the time that we were teaching there. I was in charge of curriculum, and we were also working to translate the materials.

### **Can you talk a little bit more about the curriculum and how you adapted it to your students?**

The class consisted of a highly divergent audience. There were lots of "middle managers", which made for a compelling teaching experience. The problem was that the curriculum had to be adapted, as many of these students were already familiar with some of the concepts we were teaching.

### **Where did you travel?**

For the first two years, I didn't go anywhere. I had an established leadership position and I was really just overseeing a lot of LEADER's operations at the time. I made sure that we were communicating with sites, developing our curriculum, and made sure that all of our materials were prepared.

In 1993, I travelled to Mongolia. This is kind of "The Lost Story" with LEADER, as we didn't publicize it too much that we actually travelled to Mongolia. On a trip, I had met someone at the World Bank Group (WBG) about market development in South East Asia. Our contact had asked us to come to Washington to discuss what the LEADER Project had been up to. Eventually one thing led to another and we were invited to bring 6 instructors to Ulan Bator. This really only turned out to be a one-year gig. We were unable to continue the relationship as staff changed within the WBG.

At that point in time, things were very difficult. The times were turbulent with the collapse of the USSR. For example, the Minsk team visited Vilnius to see if a potential teaching partnership could be pursued. They actually went when the Black Berets were butchering people. They burned customs posts which were claims of the Baltic republics' independence from Moscow.

### What were some of the early mistakes that LEADER made?

Starting out as such a new organization, we encountered so many things. The thing is, we had no idea what we were getting ourselves into. Choosing the right people was a struggle. It was difficult to teach with translators - something we've never done before. It was an uncomfortable environment, as these were students from such diverse backgrounds in a political context that was changing so quickly. How do we provide value to these middle managers? This was a question we'd often ask ourselves.

Back then, we'd have multiple LEADERites in a site teaching simultaneously. When we went to Moscow, the LEADERites would meet at the same bar. We'd discuss our ideas and go through the learning process.

### Tell us about a student that you remember.

This is tough. Okay, there was one student. So, the Soviet industry was renowned for its efficiency. It also had perverse incentives. Often, the government would just make a decree for what was demanded. They would say, you have to make 1,000 truck tires per month - regardless of whether this is how much people needed. Labour was also in disarray. There was horrific alcoholism at the time, which affected the average life expectancy of workers. In general, managers had a limited ability to change and affect this environment. LEADER's teaching had to change to focus on what's relevant to these managers. For example, if these students had no dollars to spend, what's the point of talking about investing in marketing? It really constrained what kind of solutions we could pursue. We had to get creative.

One woman was super bright. She started by taking waste product from Soviet factories and used Western technologies to refine and reuse it positively. There was so much waste, from those tire factories for example, that was literally just being thrown out after the collapse. She would clear \$400,000 in profit in a week. She was an example of a great student as she basically came into the program and came out starting a real business. What we taught was directly relevant and applicable to what she was doing.

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Chris Albinson is a Co-Founder and Managing Director of Founders Circle Capital, investing in leading private technology companies primarily by providing liquidity to founders, employees and early investors. Chris helped grow four start-ups, most recently as Chief Strategy Officer for Digital Island, and was a General Partner at JP Morgan Partners, co-heading the technology venture capital practice. Chris believes strongly in building a community to support entrepreneurs, co-founding the C100. He is also an advisor to numerous start-ups. Chris was on the founding LEADER team in 1991 and taught in Mongolia in 1993.