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Companies spend large portions of their budgets developing soft skills through courses and classroom lessons.

The goal is to help them become emotionally smarter, empowered to solve problems, become more agile and flexible. However, life experiences such as parenthood can be 10 times more effective. With Life Based Value, we can find practical solutions that bring value to your teams.

Sonia Malaspina

Southeast Europe HR director at Danone

THE BEST OF PRESS REVIEW

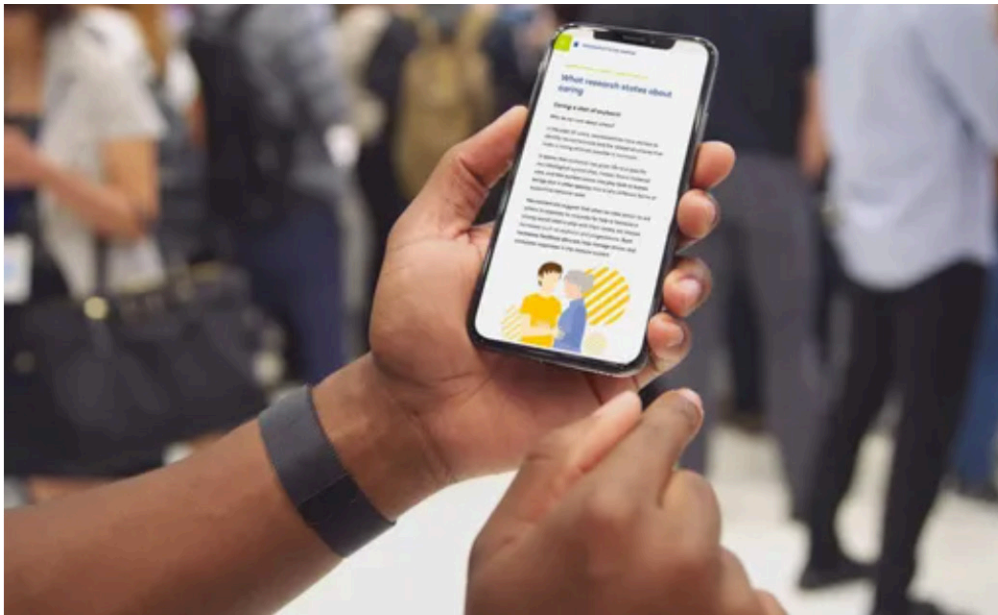
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Lifeed looks to bring parenting skills to the workplace

| Lifeed is a programme that looks to help men understand they can be a good dad and a better employee at the same time



It's felt for most of 2020 that just keeping a job and keeping your head above water counted as success. But could working dads actually increase their skill set through the pandemic? Have the months working from home and juggling homeschool and parenting made working dads more employable?

That's what the folks at [Lifeed](#) believe.

Lifeed is a programme for parents that helps them recognise the skills they gain and hone from the domestic load. And it's aimed at employers who want to know the strengths and weaknesses in their workforce and get the most out of their employees by tapping into the skills they use at home but perhaps haven't thought of bringing to work.

Embrace being a father

Stefano Rovelli from Lifeed took me through a demo recently. He explained that the programme is aimed at helping men embrace their role as a [father](#). And it wants to challenge the false dichotomy that sees family life as something in opposition to a career.

There's three key takeaways. The programme is to help new families reflect on their new roles, think about what the experience of parenthood is teaching you, and assess and certify the skills acquired.

It seems to be going down well. One dad, tech developer Pier Luigi Azzali said, "The program makes you aware of many skills that you didn't know you had, but were actually inside you all along. In this way, I'm much more aware of what I am as a whole. The most beautiful skills that the program allowed me to develop were empathy and priority management. I also felt like I grew in terms of listening, empathy, and properly understanding people. It was very nice to bring this all into the workplace."

Invisible skills

Lifeed was founded by Italian Riccarda Zezza. After 15 years of working management positions in the corporate world she was demoted after having her second child. She felt that the experience of parenthood gave her incredible new 'invisible' skills, but her employer saw it as a burden. She created Lifeed to tackle the problem. The company claims over 15,000 people and 70 International organisations have chosen the program to date, including companies like Accenture, Santander and Danone – across all different industries.



Employees comfortable bringing their whole self to work are usually more productive. As Stefano explained, "If you support new parents in your company, that's good for your bottom line."

Real life

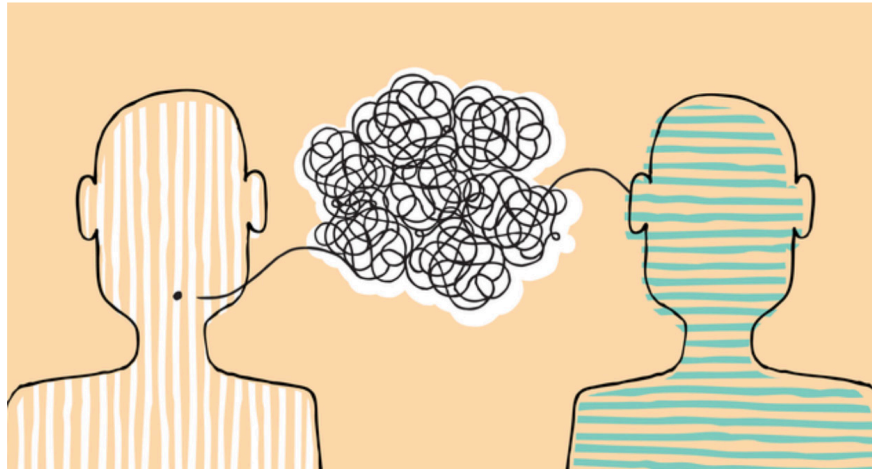
Parents take a sort of soft skills test at the start and end of the programme. So they can see very clearly what they've learned along the way. And there are real world exercises, called missions, involved to make the relevance away from your screen explicit. Participants put in 20-30 minutes a week on modules that feature a mix of open and closed questions. So there are straightforward questions and some that require a bit of introspection and thought. Those write-in answers can be shared with the company using the software, anonymously of course, to give bosses an idea of how employees are feeling and what they can do to help. For this reason Lifeed has recently adapted its programme to apply to not just parents but those returning to work post lockdown.

The firm has combined the two to reach tentative but nevertheless interesting conclusions. That parents tended to be more rational in their response to the Covid crisis. Dads used to dealing with domestic dramas were calmer, more rational and did not panic or shut down in the face of the pandemic.

It's a classic example of exactly what Lifeed is trying to demonstrate – that parenting skills are useful in the workplace and ought to be valued as such. Added Stefano, "Spending the afternoon reading a story to your child does not mean you are foregoing your professional ambitions. You can combine the two, they can feed off each other."

Why soft skills are becoming ever more important to businesses

By **Riccarda Zezza** on 23 Sep 2020 in [Latest News](#), [Learning & development](#), [Skills shortages](#), [Emotional intelligence](#), [Leadership](#)



Interpersonal skills, empathy and resilience are strongly desired by employers as they look towards business recovery. Riccarda Zezza discusses how these ‘soft’ skills can be developed in every day life.

With advances in technology and societal priorities, jobs are constantly evolving – meaning it’s now near-impossible to just learn one skill and settle into a career for life. The pandemic has added another twist to the theme but rapid change was already established.

According to a survey by McKinsey & Company, 87% of companies are experiencing skills gaps or expect them within a few years, and this tumultuous job market has birthed a new desire from employers to replace traditional skill sets with “soft” skills.

Soft skills

Do we need to get ‘soft’ on training?

Two in five hired into jobs not suited to their personality

The key differentiator is that these don’t relate to what work you do, but *how* you work. They include interpersonal skills, emotional-based skills – like empathy and resilience – as well as time management, communication and many more. These skills aren’t specific to one job alone, and leave workers well-prepared for a rapidly changing landscape where adapting to new technologies and environments will be pivotal.

PwC’s 2020 Annual CEO Survey talks in significant depth about the growing need for soft skills to address the imminent skill gap, with a key take away being that organisations *need* to build transferable skills that will continue to remain important however technology changes the workplace.

The skills needed today to cope with tomorrow are creativity, problem solving and an understanding of how digital technology can be used. Carol Stubbings, joint global leader of PwC’s people and organisation practice, puts it well: “It’s about people, not about jobs – because jobs will change or have already changed”.

Looking specifically at one country, it’s possible for the detrimental effects of this skills gap to be quantified financially. A report from the Foundation for Young Australians shows that the skills today’s professionals are learning won’t be of use within a decade, with its CEO Jan Owen believing that soft skills would be more important to learn. Despite Australia’s \$91bn annual investment in education and training, there is still a significant number of young people who are not finding jobs because of this, which is short-changing the country’s economy by \$4.5 billion a year.

Accelerating change

Covid-19 is undoubtedly playing a significant role in this transformation, too. The pandemic and subsequent lockdown is accelerating the automation and digitalisation of many industries – meaning that an unpredictable, constantly changing career landscape has become a reality.

Employees can survive by focusing on their adaptable soft skills, and employers, likewise, can survive by investing in their people and making them resilient to the chaos. Businesses should ask themselves, “do we have the capabilities to thrive in the new normal?”

The emotional element of soft skills are more important than ever because of this. With workforces facing increased stress through remote working and job uncertainty, organisations must ensure employees feel cared for and valued, and likewise, for employees to prove they can act with grace and compassion to clients, suppliers, and teammates.

At Lifeed, we conducted research involving more than 1,500 employees, from European companies such as EY and Kia, about their attitudes towards work in lockdown. The results indicated an acutely emotionally aware workforce; 83% expected their company to make room for change upon return from lockdown, and 69% expected their company to make space for people’s thoughts and feelings to facilitate the return to the office.

This also reflects the importance of soft skills for leaders at the very top. Traditional business leaders have often been considered obsessed with the end result, in spite of how easy they are to work with, but now leaders must also be emotionally intelligent and highly ethical – which some refer to as the New Alpha.

Nurturing soft skills

So, how does one develop and nurture soft skills? The fact of the matter is that life itself, and the experiences we go through, are the breeding ground for soft skills. For example, becoming a parent develops skills like self-awareness, time management and complex problem-solving, while caring for an elderly relative develops patience, communication and self-confidence.

Going through the lockdown experience has also trained soft skills in us all, like self-determination, flexibility, and empathy. The key is to get employees to constantly reflect on where such skills they use could be applied to a workplace context.

My company works to do just that through digital training programmes. The Italian branch of Danone implemented our programme for new parents to reflect on the skills learned during this experience and found quantifiable increases in various skills, including decision making (+15%), delegation (+35%), managing complex situations (+10%), empathy (+35%) and mental agility (+20%).

Now leaders must also be emotionally intelligent and highly ethical.”

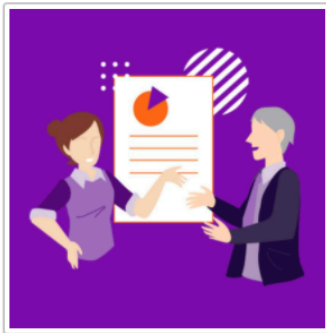
It’s clear that soft skills are becoming absolutely essential for the workforce of today and indeed tomorrow. By focusing on these, and considering how they can be applied to work tasks, employers and employees alike can be prepared for the uncertainty ahead.

insight.

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Life-Based Value launch digital training program harnessing new skills

by *Freddie Steele* • *Company news*



Life Based Value has announced the launch of 'Crisis', a brand new digital training program available for British businesses that harness unique skills learned during the current lockdown for the world of work. The announcement took place at EdTechX's Global online summit, from company founder Riccarda Zezza, as the UK is facing one of its most intense and challenging ever transitions – the disruption of normal working life due Covid-19, and the eventual return to work after lockdown measures eventually ease.

Life Based Value conducted research of over 1,500 employees from European companies such as EY and KIA showed that 60 per cent of people are ready to return to work with renewed energy. Many also feel they have a fresh approach to work, almost half (41 per cent) saying they have gained new skills during this time of crisis.

However, the results also revealed that most workers expect to see some change in their company. This includes 83 per cent who expect their company to make room for change upon return from lockdown, and 69 per cent expecting there to be more space for their thoughts and feelings to be heard as part of the return to the office. A further 82 per cent reflected a more definitive opinion that "lots of things *must* change", suggesting that this time in lockdown has also given many employees time to reflect on their values and lifestyles.

Skills learned during COVID-19 lockdown

The Crisis program directly responds to the needs highlighted by the survey. Developed through extensive research, the course accompanies people through managing change, reducing stress, and releasing their potential for innovation. It helps show effective methods of navigating interactions with others, and makes information available to HR managers, to ensure they guide people through all aspects of the lockdown – including the return to work. It specifically aims to train skills such as self-determination, emotional awareness, flexibility, planning, effective communication, empathy, and creativity.

Available for entire companies, participants are guided through cognitive stimulation and reflections across a 9-step online journey, starting with individual exercises before joining up with their colleagues to form a collective narrative of the situation. It takes the form of 9 weekly modules, each lasting around 30 minutes, to be completed over a 3 month period.

Crisis was developed with insight from a large research team, including Pier Giovanni Bresciani, a lecturer at the University of Urbino, Italy, who also represents the Italian Government in the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

The course accompanies people through managing change, reducing stress, and releasing their potential for innovation

Tuning in

Riccarda Zezza, Founder of Life Based Value commented: "As we prepare for a future return to work, companies must tune into the new needs of their employees. We're absolutely delighted to help increase their capacity to innovate and, in general, they can count on a workforce that's stronger, more motivated and more aware with Crisis. Our program, which we have worked tirelessly on, accompanies people as they manage change. At a personal level, they feel heard and involved in the process of redefining their company's culture – reducing stress and unleashing their creative potential."

Life Based Value offers a selection of digital training programs to workplaces based on the underappreciated value of key life transitions and the skills they develop in employees, and to-date has been chosen by over 14,000 people and 75 international organisations.

Pricing is tailored to each company's specific needs. For more information, please visit: <https://www.maam.life/en/the-value-suite/lbv-programs/crisis/>



Forbes

Is Your Company "Life Ready?" Riccarda Zezza's Innovation Views Work And Life Together



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Ashoka Fellow Riccarda Zezza is reframing early motherhood as a "masters degree" in skills like empathy and time management. ASHOKA

Meet Riccarda Zezza, the founder of "Maternity As A Masters," a digital training program that turns early parenthood into a "masters degree" in skills like empathy and time management. Starting in Italy and now reaching participants in 23 countries, MAAM works with businesses to show that the learning that comes with new life experiences can fuel professional growth. Ashoka's Sonia Park caught up with Riccarda to learn more.

Q: How did you come up with this concept?

A: I had been working in big companies for 15 years when I had my first child. I felt as if my employers saw having a child as a problem for work. After being demoted when I returned to work after having my second child, I decided to switch gears and find different solutions to this everlasting challenge. With MAAM, I set out to change the mental association of maternity as an illness or a problem to *Maternity As A Masters*.

Q: How does MAAM work? What are the key components?

A: MAAM taps into companies that typically invest in employee skills development. Companies subscribe to MAAM and pay a yearly fee. They offer the program to mothers and fathers of children from zero to three years old and pregnant women, which typically is about 10% of a company. For the next six months, users access weekly digital modules that focus on how to use this overall life experience to improve 12 specific skills, such as problem solving and creativity. At the end of the program, users have completed what we call "Life-Based Learning," which is a learning method that shows people how they can use these same soft skills to be more effective at work and at home. During day-by-day activities, they learn to apply these skills to real-life work situations, where they become more aware of their newfound potential.

Q: Sounds like a win-win for employees and employers in any sector.

A: It absolutely is. Employers discover the training potential hidden in life experiences. Employees become more valuable because they are learning powerful new skills that artificial intelligence can't replicate and they are harmonizing their work and home lives.

Q: What's your biggest challenge?

A: The biggest challenge is that we had to work on three sets of people simultaneously to reframe maternity leave as an opportunity: new parents, employers and society as a whole. MAAM's innovative framework is creating and serving a market at the same time.

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Q: International Women's Day was last week. The theme this year is "Balance for Better," focusing on a "gender-balanced world." What is MAAM's take on gender balance?

A: We need more women leading. But as long as we ask women to follow the existing leadership model—which derives largely from male leaders—it will be difficult for women to actually thrive inside this model. We can find a powerful leadership model inside parenthood, because mothers—and fathers—are instinctively leaders of their family. They grow people who hopefully leave them and survive them. That's the highest level of leadership imaginable. So if we call women for that leadership model, women will take it. That's the best way to grow a new generation of women leaders. I see MAAM as actually expanding and opening more than including.

Q: You are starting to work with other life experiences now. Tell me about this.

A: Yes, we started with motherhood, but we're expanding a whole new set of opportunities for everyone. We are developing life readiness that comes from transitions and transformative relationships. We ask companies if they are "Life Ready"—are they ready to accept the fact that life has entered the workplace, to make room for this fact and take advantage of those new resources? My biggest dream is for there to be a general awareness in the world that life and work have a synergy, that having more roles in life—as a parent or caregiver, for example—makes people more resilient and effective at work. I hope we can stop talking about work/life balance because the level of stress people are experiencing is not sustainable. We need a new framework that views work and life together. The idea of work-life balance considers ourselves as cakes: the more slices we have, the smaller the slices. But we're not cakes. We're like concentric circles, so the more circles we have, the stronger we are. That's the ultimate change MAAM wants to see.

Riccarda Zezza is featured in the new report "Celebrating ChangemakHERS: How Women Social Entrepreneurs Lead and Innovate," supported by the Citi Foundation. One of the key takeaways of the report is how using life experiences as an asset for work results in fuller, more effective entrepreneurship and leadership. To discover other strategies women social entrepreneurs use, read the report at ashoka.org/women.

Editor's Pick: Life Based Value



Romy Tuin [Follow](#)
Mar 25 · 6 min read



Life Based Value is an ethical social enterprise based in Italy that empower businesses to do good in the world. Their goal is to transform life experiences into business skills — and shape a world of work where everyone can fulfil their potential. We spoke with Riccarda Zezza, CEO of Life Based Value to discuss the inspiration behind the company and the current Covid-19 pandemic...



Riccarda Zezza, CEO, Life Based Value

What was the inspiration behind starting Life Based Value?

I had been working for large companies for 15 years before I had my first child. When I became a mother, I felt that my employer saw it as being problematic for the company. After having my second child, I was demoted upon returning to work, so I decided to switch gears and find different solutions to this eternal challenge. With Life Based Value, I want to change the perception of parenthood and caregiving from being seen as an 'illness' or 'problem' to becoming a training ground for soft skills. When we bring life and work together, rather than seeing them as in conflict, we stop talent and resources being wasted in society and in business.

Tell us a little more about the tech behind the product:

Our proprietary learning method is backed by science, and delivered on our proprietary technology platform. Some of the content uses algorithms to optimise and personalise the delivery. An example of this is our multi-circle exercise that applies a Kellogs University study, showing the different roles that a person has and the skills that those roles develop. The technology pushes different elements of our content, reflections and application exercises. This allows the user to apply their learning in real life situations before coming back to the platform to share their experiences. Our technology also gives them the chance for people to connect with caregivers in other companies. Finally, we have an online journal section where users record their experiences. At the end of the program, they can download a PDF of their entries as a keepsake, to remind them of the journey they have taken through the transition. We continue to develop the platform as an AI-led tool, analysing the content and reporting back clear data about the programs and themes that relate to our work, people wellbeing, leadership and teamwork.

Where do you see Life Based Value in the next 3 years?

In the next 3 years, we would like to expand our product Life Based Learning range to include 2 more programs to tackle different life phases and reach more of the corporate population. Our aim is for Life Based Learning to become an internationally recognised skilling and educational method that can be applied to any situation on a daily basis. We want to make this tool available to everyone, regardless of the transition or life phase that they find themselves in. It's our way of reframing the corporate discourse of work-life balance as work-life synergy. We would also like to have made a significant research contribution in the areas of life transitions, emotional intelligence, leadership and human transformation.

Look back to the day you started, what would you have done differently?

When starting a business, I think it's fundamental to choose the 'right' business partners to share the journey with. You need to choose people that have a lot to give and that are willing to openly share their experience and contribute ideas to the business. I don't think you can be a key player in a company if you are not actively involved in it.

On the whole, I would have done everything else more or less as we have done. Sometimes our journey has seemed a bit random, but everything has unfolded in the best way possible.



Team at Life Based Value — Photo Courtesy of Maam, Life Based Value

What piece of advice would you give to other entrepreneurs?

I think you have to be organized and set boundaries around your role so you can stay focused. When you're launching a business, and especially one with innovative solutions, it's easy to be pulled in lots of different directions. If you're not careful, you can end up following 10 different threads at the same time, and this will burn you out. It's important to be clear with yourself about what you want to do and achieve so you can follow your own path.

Who inspires you?

The people who inspire me most are my children. They have their whole lives ahead of them and the world is filled with possibilities. It's a shame that we lose sight of that as we grow up. So, I try to take inspiration from them. They remind me that they already have all the resources they need to be able to move forward. Instead of losing sight of those resources as we get older, we have the chance to conserve and apply them.

How does starting your company in Italy help you? What separates this ecosystem from others?

Italy has a challenging climate in terms of work-life balance. 1 in 3 women don't return to work after maternity leave. We have one of the lowest female employment rates in Europe and one of the lowest birth rates in the world. In many ways it's behind the curve in this area and there's so much to be done. But this climate has allowed us to develop advanced solutions from the get go. We work with large corporations who are looking to transform their corporate cultures and they have really bought into our innovation. That's important, because if your innovation doesn't find fertile ground, it can't grow enough to survive. The combination of a culture that's behind the curve and established companies seeking innovation has been the best ecosystem for our solution.

How has technology helped advance your product to reach your market/audience?

We have evolved with technology over time. When we first started we used classroom sessions to talk about the Life Based Learning method, but the limitations were evident. This is for two reasons: experience and scalability. You can't achieve the same experience in a one-day classroom session as you can with micro-learning that happens over time in a real life context. At the same time, it's much more challenging to scale an offline activity and expand your audience. Digital delivery resolves both of these issues. Our weekly sessions offer opportunities to explore content and to reflect on personal experiences, while also making space to experiment and apply those learnings in real life situations. Our solution is unique as the learning resonates across the world, irrespective of culture, from Asia and South America to Africa. Life transitions can teach us transilience wherever we find ourselves in the world.

What do you think is the next big thing that is going to happen in EdTech?

I hope that we all stop thinking about EdTech as using old educational methods on a new platform. Technology is a facilitator for us to invent new training methods. It's a tool to help us innovate, with new ways of teaching and new ways of learning. That's what we try to do as a company.

Finally, is there anything I should have asked you but didn't?

With the current pandemic, the world is undergoing a period of transition at the moment. Here in Italy, there is a strong sense that we have to care for one another. Our digital solutions are helping us to bring this concept to companies and families that are having to adapt to new ways of working and living during this evolution. As a business, we feel that it's time to grow and solidify our presence in an ecological way, making sure that we are not wasting any resources or skills that we already have available to us. We hope that once this transition has ended, we will all feel the benefit of having honed our skills.



Photo Courtesy of Life Based Vaue



Maternity as A Masters: life experiences turned into business skills comes to the UK

Posted by DiversityQ | 22 Jul 2019 | Development, News, Working Parents | 0 | ★★★★★

Life Based Value plans to establish Maternity as a Masters in international markets, starting with the UK, after securing £1.3 million



Young mother in home office with computer and her baby. Work and child care

Life Based Value (LBV), led by founder and CEO Riccarda Zezza, has announced its first expansion outside of Italy. The company offers digital soft skills-based training programmes, such as Maternity As A Masters (MAAM), that harnesses soft skills gained through life transitions such as parenthood into business capabilities.

Securing a total of £1.3 million in funding for scaling the platform and starting its international growth, Life Based Value has also hired ex-Primo Toys co-founder Valeria Leonardi as its International Lead to drive growth in the UK and Internationally. Maternity as A Masters is now available in English for rollout to UK businesses.

Italy has 13% of female-led businesses, with a similar estimated number in the UK. This round of funding is all about the tenacity and entrepreneurial spirit of the women who lead it. Riccarda Zezza founded LBV after 15 years of management positions in the corporate world, where she was demoted upon her return to work after having her second child. She created MAAM as a solution to this common problem for working parents.

The company team also includes Milena Prisco, Legal Counsel, Fausta Pavesio, who is amongst the 50 most influential business angels in Europe, Elena Casolar from Opes-LCEF Foundation, Melody Lang, founder of MPA Education, with the VC round being lead by Impact Ventures from Hungary.

Every year in Europe alone, [ten million people become new or second-time parents](#), and around seven million (over one in 10) people in the UK are carers, being depended on by someone else for support. By 2030, the number of carers will increase by around 60% to over 10.4 million. The economic value of the contribution made by carers in the UK is [£132bn a year](#). Businesses spend fortunes managing their absences – and billions each year on training people in soft skills. Life Based Value allows businesses to harness the skills people develop as parents and carers – such as empathy, creativity, communication, managing time effectively and leadership, and allows parents to unlock new opportunities in their current roles and future careers.

Based on scientific research developed into a unique proprietary training method, the Italian startup's platform is already being used by over 50 firms in Italy including Accenture, Danone, Boston Consulting Group, Amgen, and UniCredit. It is being piloted in 23 countries and 218 cities across the US, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Over 6,000 people have participated and the results have shown the programme can improve effectiveness in business skills by up to 35%.

Life Based Value has now focused its efforts on zeroing in on life transitions and their learning potential and has extended the initial parenting offer with a new caregiving program. Riccarda Zezza, the co-author of Maternity as A Masters method and CEO, commented:

“This last leg of the raise is an important milestone on our journey, one that has been particularly intense and strenuous – all the LBV team participated in the process and grew from the experience. This also signals the beginning of scaling and growing internationally. As I traveled the world I have seen first hand how the innovation of our solution is sought after from Germany to Japan to SouthEast Asia. This is the reason why our next growth phase, besides consolidating our position in Italy, will be outward-looking. We know that Life Based Learning combines wellbeing and personal development. We want as many companies and individuals as possible to have access to the benefits that this brings.

Melody Lang, Founder, MPC Education commented:

“I am extremely proud to be backing such an impressive founder with a strong vision I totally adhere to. I am thrilled to be part of this new chapter for MAAM: a solution that needs to be offered to many more parents globally!”

In response to the transformation of their market, Italian telecommunications company Linkem has been utilising MAAM to develop positive attitudes and skills in their employees, including self-awareness, empathy and listening, mental elasticity and complex problem solving, which have proved vital in coping well with this change.

PetaCrunch

AI-powered media company

MAAM, a learning methodology that turns parenthood into a masters' degree from Life Based Value

Life Based Value has raised £1.3M in total. We talked with Riccarda Zezza, its CEO, and her team.

PetaCrunch: How would you describe MAAM in a single tweet?

Riccarda Zezza: A learning methodology that turns parenthood and other family caring responsibilities into a masters' degree in soft-skills, and a competitive advantage for businesses.

PC: How did it all start and why?

RZ: Riccarda Zezza, co-author of MAAM methodology and co-founder and CEO of Life Based Value, had been working in big companies for 15 years when she had her first child. She felt as if her employers saw having a child as a problem for work. After being demoted when she returned to work after having her second child, she decided to switch gears and find different solutions to this constant, unfair challenge. With MAAM, she set out to change the mental association of maternity as an illness or a problem to Maternity As A Masters.

PC: What have you achieved so far?

RZ: We have 60+ corporate clients in Italy across sectors, including professional services, (Accenture and BCG), FMCG (Barilla), the financial sector (Unicredit and Credit Agricole), Energy (Eni and Enel), Insurance (Generali and Unipol), the legal sector (Hogan Lovells), the pharmaceutical sector (Biogen and Amgen), Public administration (Municipality of Milan), Retail and distribution (OVS and Heineken), supply and logistics (Alstom and Schneider), Telecommunications (Linkem and Prysmian) and the Transportation sector (Trenitalia and Italo).

From a product perspective, we are very proud to be launching our new master CARE for caregivers in Q1 – this is the result of intense work of research, combined with the learning we have gathered over the last three years with our Master for young parents, our tool for managers which helps them both overcome any bias they might unconsciously have, and make them aware of the work the employees are doing. Other products we have are a series of webinars aimed at the whole company that gives an overview of the benefits of life based learning.

Our team has increased rapidly over the last 12 months, with our product dev team growing and consolidating with both tech and research additions to ensure we make the best products we can, whilst continuing our research efforts with partner organisations. We have also hired a Head of Business in Italy, Maurizio Zazzare, who has extensive experience in corporate sales having lead Microsoft in Italy for over 20 years and a true passion for what we do. On top of this, to spearhead International Growth we have brought onboard Valeria Leonardi, who combines her international experience from years working with startups in London and growing them internationally with her knowledge of Italian culture and her personal passion for our mission.

PC: How will you use your recent funding round?

RZ: The funding will mostly go to product development, marketing and growing the team to support our growth plans. The goal is to solidify our position in Italy and become the go-to brand for all that is soft-skills development and cultural life work synergies. A smaller portion of the raise will go into international expansion. Here we are working to build brand awareness in key territories, win over marquee clients, and set up a network of strategic partnerships to support our growth plans.

PC: What do you plan to achieve in the next 2-3 years?

RZ: In the next 2-3 years, we would like to expand our product range to include 2 more masters, on top of CARE, that tackle other particularly important transitions in life. We would also like to have made a significant contribution to research in the field of the life transition, emotional intelligence, leadership and human transformation, and to have the concept of Life Based Learning become a widely known and respected skilling and educational method. We hope for LBV to become a recognisable name, and the discourse of work-life balance to have been successfully reframed as work-life synergy.



Digital training platform CARE to upskill UK carers

Life Based Value's digital CARE programme instils essential business and leadership skills in caregivers



Genna Ash

Life Based Value, an organisation that creates innovative solutions for the development of human capital, has launched the digital training platform **CARE** – a programme dedicated to helping the nation's growing population of carers gain the transferable skills needed to thrive in business and beyond.

Research from [Carers UK](#) has uncovered that 65% of UK adults had been a carer at some point in their lives, and between 15-18% of people in work had been carers between 2016 and 2018. CARE hopes to improve quality of life and opportunities for some of the nation's most **invaluable and under-appreciated invisibles**. According to Carers UK, the contribution made by carers to the UK economy is £132bn a year.

With 80% of carers reporting that the experience gave them greater self-confidence, and 86% claiming that caregiving taught them how to manage challenging situations, the new platform provides a space where carers can put these skills to use, free from being penalised for their care responsibilities. Built on the back of scientific research that has been moulded into a unique proprietary training method, CARE allows employees who care for elderly, sick or dependents refine their relationships with others and the external environment, as well as their personal development and leadership skills.

Training modules cover everything from stress management, to change management, risk and error management, on top of softer skills such as patience and perseverance, self-confidence and self-awareness.

"There is an urgent need for innovative solutions to support the endemic lack of carers – in the UK alone, there is an expected need for 580,000 additional social care workers by 2035," said Nicola Palmarini, director of the UK's [National Innovation Centre for Ageing](#) at Newcastle University. "Life Based Value brings a concrete example of how this issue can be addressed [by] leveraging a collaborative interaction between employers and employees to empower each other in a joint play to benefit both the work-life balance of the individuals and the needs of an ageing society."

Riccarda Zezza, CEO of Life Based Value, said: "Taking care of others teaches us behaviours that can make us more effective in every area, because it concerns our relationships and our capacity to leverage all our resources into every role we play in life. Care tends to be an area that is underserved and misunderstood by both businesses and governments, especially at a time of socio-economic uncertainty like the UK is currently undergoing. The CARE platform empowers businesses and individuals to bring value to the experiences that can often be overlooked, and truly nurture and upskill existing talent."

Life Based Value's platform is already being used by over 60 Italian firms, including Accenture, Danone, Boston Consulting Group, Amgen and UniCredit. It is currently being piloted in 23 countries and 218 cities across the US, Europe, Southeast Asia and Australia.

"Companies spend large portions of their budgets developing soft skills through courses and classroom lessons," said Sonia Malaspina, Southeast Europe HR director at Danone. "The goal is to help them become emotionally smarter, empowered to solve problems, become more agile and flexible. However, life experiences such as parenthood can be 10 times more effective. With Life Based Value, we can find practical solutions that bring value to your teams."



LIFE BASED LEARNING: WORKPLACE TRAINING FOR MUMS AND DADS

Is it a mistake to talk about ‘work life balance’? If we only live one life, why do we go to such lengths to separate the domestic and professional? Well, Life Based Learning (previously known as MAAM) is a life-based training course that highlights skills you will have developed as a parent so you can apply them in the workplace.

Introducing Life Based Learning and a few words about the name

Life Based Learning was created in Italy by Riccarda Zezza, for her company Life Based Value, following the arrival of her second child. A huge amount of development and research went into creating the Life Based Learning concept and having been available in Italy for some time, it’s now been opened up to UK employees.



Put very simply, Zezza felt that skills we develop as parents are transferable to the workplace. Negotiation, empathy, listening, delegation and time management are just a few of the skills that are as vital to the family as they are to employers.

This idea, however, receives very little recognition and so Life Based Learning was established to get employees thinking differently about their approach to work and family life. Employers can sign up to the scheme and offer it to their staff as a form of online workplace training. Zezza says this is vital as many employees miss out on training opportunities when they have children and so Life Based Learning goes some way to filling that gap.

A quick word about the former name, MAAM (which stood for Maternity As A Masters). I can imagine some dads may have found the name Maternity as a Masters off-putting. I’ve completed a trial of the course and once you sign-in and register as a father, everything is tailored to you as a dad (conversely, register as a mum and it will be tailored to you). The language used refers to fathers, the tasks you complete relate to fathers and the video content is all reflective of fathers. It has been very-well tailored to men so my advice to dads is to see past the name (and anyway FAAM would sound like a dreadful 1980s TV show!).

Undertaking the Life Based Learning trial

I have undertaken a trial of the program and studied some of the modules, each one focusing on a skill you have as a parent. As you complete modules, various tasks are unlocked. You must undertake the tasks using the skills you have to complete the course.

Registration for the program is simple. It requires some basic details about you and your children. In addition to the modules, you will also have access to the moderated online Life Based Learning community so you have support from your peers and it's all behind the password-protected Life Based Learning website, so comments are not public.

The suggestion is that you should only need to spend about 20 minutes a week on the Life Based Learning training. In my experience, you may want to dedicate a little more time than this, but it's certainly not onerous. I can't imagine employers complaining about their staff spending hours and hours each week on the training.

NEW FATHERS, NEW OBSTACLES

A heated debate is underway: in Italy, paternity leave is still only minimally a right, and often subject to the prejudices of colleagues and managers.

The more enlightened companies are beginning to understand that this life dimension must be recognized and valued, in men as well as women.

The research done by MAAM, the core of the program you are now following, was carried out in part to demonstrate to society and the economy that practicing the paternal role is a source of energies and skills that are valuable in every area of life, and should therefore be fully acknowledged.

What kind of obstacles do you think fathers face today? Choose one of the answers given by previous participants, or add another of your own if you like.

- Cultural obstacles: there are so many stereotypes about us dads, who are neither seen nor understood at work, in society and in relationships
- Time management obstacles: it's hard for fathers to strike a balance between work and life
- Obstacles related to financially supporting the family: I always have to choose between family time and 'bringing home the bacon'
- Other obstacles: the intrusions of technology and hyper-connectivity

The training is tailored to you, whether a mother or father and I found it was tailored very well.

I won't tell you about every single module I undertook as that would take a long time! That said, after a module focusing on the Life Based Learning way of study, I completed a module on empathy.

The modules all follow a similar pattern of study. You usually watch a short video and read a manageable amount of text on the chosen subject. Often there are multiple choice questions and some open-ended questions which force you to apply your knowledge to home and work life.

Regardless of the module, this is the bit that really gets you thinking. When it came to thinking about empathy, I had to consider leadership and team building and it was, like all the modules, very thought provoking. I found this module particularly engaging because it really got me thinking about how I listen to my children and whether I could be better at it.

There are many modules to complete. They include:

- Communication (Empathy, Listening, Verbal Communication, Collaboration)
- Management (Time Management, Decision Making, Managing Complexity, Delegation)
- Innovation (Problem Solving, Creativity, Mental Agility, Change Management)

With the modules completed, you are then given missions to complete so you can apply what you have learned. I'll list three of the missions so you can get an understanding of what it involves:

- Be actively empathetic with someone
- Delegating and letting go and
- Giving your time to others.

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I think it would force employees to think differently and appreciate just how transferable their skills are. Crucially, I think this could be a great tool for getting managers to see how the skills their staff (be they mums or dads) have developed at home can be used in the workplace.

John Adams

The Dad Blog UK

