Educational initiatives

United Nations supported Principles for Responsible Management Education: purpose, progress and prospects

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Jasmin Godemann [a,*], Jonas Haertle [b], Christian Herzig [c], Jeremy Moon [a]

[a] Nottingham University Business School, International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR), Jubilee Campus, Wollaton Road, Nottingham NG8 1BB, UK
[b] PRME Secretariat, UN Global Compact Office, 801 2nd Ave., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA
[c] Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham Business School, 607 Newton Building, Burton Street, Nottingham NG1 4BU, UK

ABSTRACT

The expectation that management education institutions should be leading thought and action on issues related to corporate responsibility and sustainability has been reinforced in the light of their association with business leaders' failings, including corporate corruption, the financial crisis and various ecological system crises. The United Nations supported Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative is an important catalyst for the transformation of management education and a global initiative to change and reform management education in order to meet the increasing societal demands for responsible business. This paper introduces the initiative and illustrates progress made by PRME signatories drawing upon analysis of their self-presentations in their Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports. The paper synthesizes the studies' findings and concludes with some thoughts on current and future directions and prospects of the initiative.

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1. Introduction

The expectation that management education institutions should be leading thought and action on issues related to corporate responsibility and sustainability has been reinforced in the light of their association with business leaders' failings, including corporate corruption, the financial crisis and various ecological system crises. This paper reviews the purpose and achievements of a key initiative to transform management education in order to meet the increasing societal demands for responsible business, the United Nations supported Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). It also critically reflects on issues affecting current and future directions of the Initiative.

In the following section the Initiative's purpose and mission are described. Two core elements of the Initiative, the six plus one principles and the Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports, are introduced. In Section 3, the paper draws upon analysis of signatories' self-presentations in their SIP reports to describe the progress made since the Initiative's launch in 2007. Finally, in Section 4 concluding thoughts on current and future directions and prospects of the Initiative are given.

2. The purpose of PRME

The United Nations supported initiative "Principles for Responsible Management Education" (PRME) addresses the responsibilities of management education institutions in preparing today's and tomorrow's business professions for the challenge of bringing about more responsible and sustainable business. It expects fundamental changes to the conduct of business, on the assumption that companies have wider responsibilities for society and the environment than simply profitability and meeting shareholders' interest. The expectation that management education institutions should be leading thought and action on issues related to social responsibility and sustainability has been reinforced in the light of their association with business leaders' failings, regarding corporate corruption (e.g. Enron, Siemens, UBS), and economic (e.g. the financial sector meltdown) and ecological (e.g. regarding global warming) system failings. Given their critical role in management education (e.g. as one of the financial sector's

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 1159250962.
 E-mail address: godemann@uni.leuphana.de (J. Godemann).

main recruitment source) they have frequently been singled out by their stakeholders as having a particular responsibility in the broad agenda for social, economic and ecological sustainability (e.g. Khurana, 2010; Khurana and Nohria, 2008). In response to these criticisms, some efforts have been made to advance business ethics and corporate social responsibility education (Matten and Moon, 2005; Moon and Orlitzky, 2011; Orlitzky and Moon, 2010). Nonetheless the challenge remains rethinking management and leadership education (GRLI, 2012). In this context, PRME has been referred to as the key catalyst for the transformation of management education and for necessary changes required to meet the increasing societal demands for a responsible economy (Waddock et al., 2011; Rasche and Kell, 2010; Haertle, 2012).

The PRME initiative, launched in 2007 by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the Global Compact Leaders Summit, was developed by an international group of deans, university presidents, and representatives of sixty business schools in collaboration with several other institutions including the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC which hosts the PRME Secretariat), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the Aspen Institute's Business and Society Program, the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI), the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS − now simply ABIS), and NetImpact, a student organization with more than 13,000 members. They all have remained partners of the initiative whilst the steering committee that guides the initiative has received further support from the Graduate Management Admission Council, the African Association of Business Schools (AABS), the Latin American Business School Council (CLADEA), CEEMAN, representing management schools in transforming markets, and the Association of Asia-Pacific Business Schools (AAPBS). As such, the initiative represents a multilateral effort to embed social responsibility and sustainability into management education institutions and core areas of education, research and organization/operations.

The mission of PRME is to inspire and foster responsible management education, research and thought leadership for long-term oriented, socially responsible business. It aims to support management education institutions adapt their curricula, research, teaching methodologies and institutional strategies in order to develop a generation of responsible business leaders and enhance research on PRME related issues. Although the initiative is not yet part of any accreditation process, it has been endorsed by two leading management education accreditation organizations. AACSB International has endorsed it as a complement to and continuous framework for management education. EFMD has referred to it in the context of an update of its Equis accreditation standards (see Section 3.2) (Waddock et al., 2011). Besides being a framework for implementing responsible management education, PRME has also grown as a network serving as a platform for exchanging ideas and enabling learning among the signatories through various mechanisms (e.g. local chapters, working groups − see below).

Like the UNGC, which expects signatory companies to commit to ten principles of responsible business, the PRME initiative offers principles for business and management schools to follow, and provides an environment for information sharing and learning. The initiative stresses the importance of continuous improvement along six (plus one) principles and of transparency in the form of regular Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports, as described in the following sections.

2.1. Alignment with the 6 + 1 principles

Signatories to the PRME are required to commit to six (plus one) principles when developing research, curricula and teaching methodologies, and in developing organizational practices for a more sustainable future. To embrace the increased demands upon and societal expectations of managers the first three principles focus on a shift in business education:

> *Purpose: "We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy". (Principle 1)*
> *Values: "We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact". (Principle 2)*
> *Method: "We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership". (Principle 3)*

The fourth principle addresses the relationship of knowledge generation and the businesses' role in and interaction with society and the natural environment:

> *Research: "We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value". (Principle 4)*

In relation to the mission of educating responsible managers and enabling them to deal with complex global problems, two further principles are formulated: Partnership and Dialog. These two principles stress that business education has an important role in fostering a stakeholder-oriented ethic to managers. More broadly, they highlight the role of business schools in developing a debate about social responsibility and sustainability and the importance of engaging with stakeholders to better understand and meet future challenges.

> *Partnership: "We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges". (Principle 5)*
> *Dialog: "We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability." (Principle 6)*

Finally, the initiative also stresses the necessity to transform organizational practices to reflect the business schools' overall commitment to responsibility and sustainability.

> *Operations: "We understand that our own organizational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students." (Additional/Addendum Principle).*

2.2. Sharing Information on Progress

Another parallel to the UNGC is the PRME initiative's requirement, with effect from 2010, to regularly disclose information in progress by individual institutions. Reporting on progress to other business schools and stakeholders by signatory institutions is an essential part of the active commitment to the UN PRME initiative. The purpose of SIP reports is twofold (UN PRME, 2012): a key learning opportunity through sharing experience and good practice among the PRME network and the provision of a regular account of achievements made by the signatories to all stakeholders (at least every 24 months; although yearly communication is encouraged).

In relation to the principles, SIP reports are expected to include the following four elements (UN PRME, 2012):

1. Renewal of the commitment to PRME, signed by the highest executive of the organization;
2. Major achievements in relation to the implementation of one or more of the six principles during the last 24 months;
3. Key objectives for the next 24-month period with regard to the implementation of the principle(s);
4. Desired support (meetings, tools, good practice, implementation guidelines etc.) from the UN PRME community which could help most in achieving the organizational key objectives for the next 24 months.

Further guidance is given in the SIP Policy, which, for example, suggests the use of the PRME logo in the report and the inclusion of a contact person for any SIP related questions. There is flexibility in terms of providing access to the respective SIP reports (upload of PDF, hyperlink to an existing document on the signatory's website) and of whether the SIP should be a stand-alone or part of another public report. Failure to issue a document to report on progress leads to being delisted from PRME.

Both the 6 + 1 principles and the requirements for SIP reports are formulated in a broad way to provide guidance to PRME signatories in integrating responsible management education and research and to allow individual contextualization (Waddock et al., 2011). Principles and SIP reports are also linked in that many signatories use the principles to structure their SIP reports and communicate progress and challenges in implementing the principles and future endeavors. The SIP reports therefore offer a ready database to observe progress and achievements claimed by the PRME signatories. We synthesize and reflect on the findings of these studies in the next section, following a short description of the dynamics of the PRME network.

3. Progress and achievements of PRME

3.1. A growing global network

The PRME initiative now encompasses 510 signatories from 81 countries. This represents a steady growth rate from 2008 when PRME attracted 195 signatories, with an average of about 80 new signatories joining in every subsequent year, with the greatest year of growth in 2012. However, as the policy to delist signatories which fail to submit a SIP took effect from 2013, the overall number of PRME signatories is expected to flatten out thereafter.

Despite the initiative's global nature and the international coverage of PRME signatories, the majority of signatories are from Western Europe (33%) and North America (22%) with some of the world's largest economies (particularly from Asia) significantly underrepresented among the initiative's signatories.

However, the current geographical spread of signatories is somewhat broader than at the time of the launch, when the combined share of Western Europe and the North America was 62%. Latin America (13%) and Asia, Australia and New Zealand (together 16%) are the regions with most PRME signatories outside of these dominant regions and have both slightly increased their shares of PRME signatories. Eastern Europe and CIS combined have accounted for around 10% of PRME signatories. Africa has increased its share from 3% to 7% of the total number of signatories. We discuss initiatives for further internationalization of PRME in the last section.

3.2. Progress in implementing PRME

A number of studies have been conducted of those business schools that aspire to fostering responsible management education

within their own institutions under the umbrella of PRME. Besides case studies of individual or small groups of PRME signatories (e.g. Dickson et al., 2013; Maloni et al., 2012), there has been increased interest in observing developments across the ever-expanding number of signatories. We draw upon these to present an overview of approaches to and progress in implementing PRME, and to explicate areas for further exploration and development.

One of the earliest studies by Wentzel Wolfe and Werhane (2010) explored signatories' self-presentations on approaching PRME through the analysis of participant profiles posted on the PRME website. This initial investigation of 111 reports of PRME participants (at the time of the data analysis in May 2009 only seven academic signatories had uploaded SIP reports) is indicative of early programs and models as starting places for adopting PRME. However, despite using broad categories which refer to all six Principles and which were adopted from Waddock et al. (2011), the authors acknowledge that the findings are influenced by the structure of the participant profile webpages (which focus on curricula and research) and variation of data provided (Wentzel Wolfe and Werhane, 2010). Conclusions regarding value articulation, student orientation activities, courses, and curriculum are presented and recommendations for expanding and reflecting the assessment criteria given.

There have been three studies so far which have assessed the implementation of PRME through analysis of SIP reports. The first study by Alcaraz (2010) describes initiatives taken by 44 business schools before June 2010. This analysis is structured along the six Principles and one organizational highlight for each Principle is depicted. The report concludes with recommendations for the implementation and the reporting processes of PRME signatories. The second study by Godemann et al. (2011) explores the endeavors and achievements of PRME signatories in the integration of sustainability into their teaching, research and operations by analyzing the reports of the first 100 PRME signatories to report to the PRME website. The analysis of business schools' self-presentations is conducted around a model of integration with three distinct dimensions, namely 'frameworks and strategies', 'facilitating integration and organizational change', and 'achievements'. Hence, the study gives equal emphasis to the extent to which and the ways in which business schools embed sustainability in their teaching, research and operational practice and to how business schools manage and facilitate the integration process. The third study by Stachowicz-Stanusch (2011) identifies best practices for the PRME framework analyzing 115 SIP reports. It deploys a content analysis using 54 criteria which have emerged from engaging with the data and each of which is then allocated to one of the six main principles.

More recent insights into approaches to implementing PRME have been given through a collection of case study illustrations. The 'Inspirational Guide' (PRME, 2012) contains 63 case stories from 47 institutions, representing 25 countries worldwide. Although each case presents a unique path of progress, several key strategic dimensions were found to be important across individual institutions. The case stories demonstrate that the obstacles to embracing PRME are related not as much to the adoption and acceptance of the Principles, but more to the integration of new ideas into the education process, reflecting the broader challenge of curriculum change in higher education.

Although different in focus and structure, all of the studies share the aim of capturing the progress made by business schools in implementing PRME. In the case of Alcarez (2010), Godemann et al. (2011) and Stachowicz-Stanusch (2011) this is based on analyzing business schools' self-presentations through SIP reports. However, whilst Alcarez (2010) and Stachowicz-Stanusch (2011) analyze the SIP reports along the six (plus one) principles, Godemann et al.

(2011) apply an analytical framework which lies across the principles. This approach has been picked up by the UN PRME whose 2012 Inspirational Guide both illustrates signatories' approaches to implementing the Principles and emphasizes the themes of strategic implementation, management, and organizational change. Wentzel Wolfe and Werhane (2010), Alcaraz (2010) and PRME (2012) make also recommendations for the SIP reporting process. In the following, we synthesize and reflect key findings along these lines to provide an overview of the signatories' approaches to and achievements in integrating social responsibility and sustainability.

3.2.1. Teaching and learning

The findings from the latest SIP reporting studies, based on broader sets of data (Godemann et al., 2011; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011), suggest that management education institutions initially focused on the development of new modules and programs which focus specifically on social responsibility and sustainability or have critically reflected the syllabus of individual modules and programs. However, in their 2010/11 SIP reports many management education institutions stressed they were planning to reviewing teaching, with the aim of embedding social responsibility and sustainability to cover all undergraduate and postgraduate programs (Godemann et al., 2011; Godemann et al., 2013). This finding is echoed by the Inspirational Guide (PRME, 2012) and individual cases.

The more recent attention to all programs reflects a gap highlighted by some of the SIP reporting studies – the tendency to integrate PRME related considerations into postgraduate programs, with a particular focus on the MBA programs, rather than into undergraduate programs (e.g. Godemann et al., 2011; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011). The initial emphasis on MBA programs is perhaps explained by the influence the Aspen Institute's Beyond Grey Pinstripes Business Education ranking which was based upon the integration of environmental and social impact considerations in MBA course offerings programs. Indeed several business schools which featured in the Aspen Institute ranking (run bi-annually from 1999 until 2011) were also early UN PRME signatories. For example, more than half of the top 100 MBA programs ranked in the 2011 Beyond Grey Pinstripes ranking (54%) were PRME signatories. Hence, there was an institutionally driven focus on MBA programs which meant that information for SIP reports was readily available to those schools which had submitted to the Aspen Institute Index. We will return to the role of institutional factors later in Section 3.

Moreover, although not explicitly covered by any of the SIP reporting studies, the picture painted by the data about individual modules was more about elective than compulsory modules. This echoes observations made by Rasche et al. (2013) who found that three quarters of the business schools in the 2009 Aspen Institute addressed social responsibility and sustainability through elective MBA modules. A key task thus continues to be mainstreaming PRME related teaching.

All of the studies suggest that there is a vast range of experience and possible guidance on alternative learning and teaching methods, assessment techniques, ways of designing and changing module contents/curriculum, and steering organizational change. Whilst the SIP reporting studies provide overviews of these emerging areas, it is the explicit aim of the Inspirational Guide (PRME, 2012) to share good practice examples here. The already vast compilation of good practice examples will be followed up by another volume in the near future, responding to calls made for greater sharing of experience and learning – the initial spirit of the initiative (e.g. Wentzel Wolfe and Werhane, 2010; Alcaraz, 2010, etc.).

Whilst there has been some progress for example in greater articulation of values and learning goals (Godemann et al., 2011)

compared to initial stages (e.g. Wentzel Wolfe and Werhane, 2010), other areas of teaching and learning call for further exploration and development. Questions which appear to remain under-explored relate, for example, to educational frameworks for PRME and the question of how to align learning objectives with appropriate teaching methods and assessment techniques (Godemann et al., 2011). There has been some progress in relation to new interdisciplinary teaching and transdisciplinary learning settings with the business community but this remains under-developed, possible due to the resource demands of taking interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches seriously (Godemann et al., 2011; PRME, 2012).

3.2.2. Research

All studies provide evidence of active engagement with PRME related research (in particular, Alcaraz, 2010; Godemann et al., 2011; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011). Three quarters of business schools investigated in 2010 actively encourage faculty and/or students to carry out research on responsible management (Alcaraz, 2010). However, the fact that only 10% out of 100 2011 signatories provided details about their sustainability research strategy, and elaborated on the areas of expertise and the process of engaging with sustainability research, suggests that more needs to be done in this area (Godemann et al., 2011). Similarly, Stachowicz-Stanusch (2011) report that only a small group of signatories (less than 10%) communicates a clear research agenda and/or plan focused on ethics and/or responsibility.

Consequently, there is some uncertainty as to the meaning and status of PRME-related research. This suggests that PRME might encourage signatories to reflect on their research agenda and to enable them to embed key principles of social responsibility and sustainability across research activities (such as consideration of human–environment relationships and interactions). In the 2012 Rio+20 declaration of PRME, endorsed by the participants of the 3rd Global Forum for Responsible Management Education "The Future We Want: A Roadmap for Management Education to 2020", an interest was expressed in giving "purpose to our research so that it supports organizations to serve the common good" (PRME, 2012). This is not to say that all research should be about social responsibility and sustainability but it does suggest that there might be more critical reflection on how to more systematically achieve the goal of the research principle.

Despite these uncertainties, there is some evidence of cross-faculty research collaboration (Godemann et al., 2011). What seems to be a key vehicle to encouraging and organizing social responsibility and sustainability related research is the establishment of research centres and research groups (Godemann et al., 2011; Alcaraz, 2010). There is the expectation that these serve as catalysts for faculty to engage in more societally rather than solely economically-oriented research. Other self-reported organizational efforts to enhance the sustainability research agenda include research seminars, PhD scholarships, financial support, and research awards and grants – however these are usually reported at a lower frequency (Alcaraz, 2010; Godemann et al., 2011; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011).

Overall, whilst the findings on Principles 1–3 point towards an increased take-up of the responsible management *education* agenda, evidence for PRME related *research* is still comparatively anecdotal (research is also an underrepresented topic in the 2012 Inspirational Guide). The empirical findings suggest that there is more scope to determine what PRME means for research.

A related yet underexplored area of interest is in addressing the impact of sustainability research and knowledge transfer. In the first stock-take of signatories' self-presentations, Wentzel Wolfe and Werhane (2010) called for clearer articulation of efforts to

stimulate research and research accomplishment which should include aspects of dissemination and impact; hence, a need to go beyond descriptive accounts of research projects and other research activities. It seems that impact of research has been framed and communicated too narrowly − often in form of lists of journal articles and conference presentations (e.g. Godemann et al., 2011). Only a few signatories have elaborated on the impact sustainability research has had on society. This includes transferring knowledge to other audiences through contributions in the media or other print media, popular writing and participation in public debates to transform business and the economy (which however is also partly captured under principle 6).

3.2.3. Participation and dialog

Partnership and dialog with various kinds of stakeholders is extensively reported (see in particular Alcaraz, 2010; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011; PRME, 2012). The partnering role involves various forms of interaction between signatories and corporate managers, in which managers (e.g. executives or alumni) act as:

- participant (e.g. in forums business on practices, networks),
- collaborator (e.g. within agreements with CSR departments in local industry, as guest lecturers/examiners),
- client (e.g. in consultancy, in-company programs)
- student (e.g. in customized executive education);
- other (less frequently mentioned; e.g. as business schools' advisor, governor, counsellor or ambassador (Alcaraz, 2010; PRME, 2012).

The wide scope and an extensive coverage of corporate partnerships are evident in almost all studies. It also appears that facilitating and supporting dialog and debate among stakeholders involved in PRME related issues plays a key role for PRME signatories. Dialog partners include, for example, commercial, industrial and agricultural associations, government, media or labor unions. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is most frequently referred to (Alcaraz, 2010; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011) whilst participation of and dialog with students and student organizations appear to be less common (Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2011). However, this observation could be influenced by the nature of the Principles and the structure of the SIP reports. Partnerships and dialogue with students and student organizations are explicitly addressed by Principle 6 (which is more externally oriented) and are implicit in other Principles as well. Hence this theme tends to be covered in the context of curriculum and capability development or learning experience (e.g. co-organization of teaching workshops or other events; Principles 1, 2 or 3) and research projects (e.g. student involvement in field research; Principle 4) (Alcaraz, 2010). It is unclear whether this explains the view of an unrealized opportunity arising from participation, particularly of staff and students, to 'learn from each other' (Godemann et al., 2011) or whether it reflects an actual area for further development and need to establish a communication culture that bring organizational members (i.e. faculty, staff and students) more closely together.

3.2.4. Operations

The signatories' self-presentations demonstrate commitment to greening the campus and other initiatives which help to preserve the environment, reduce emissions (with a particular emphasis on carbon emissions) and improve resource management. Environmental management systems (e.g. ISO14001) and ranking and awarding schemes seem to be instrumental for providing guidance in managing sustainable organizational practices. Note though that these observations are mainly based on the study by Godemann et al. (2011)

as little attention is paid to the addendum/additional Principle in other studies and case reports. Overall, it appears that in their organizational practice, management education institutions often reflect a university-wide strategy for creating a sustainable campus and developing a sound learning and working environment. This poses the general question about coordination of PRME related activities and management education institutions' relationship with the university and other sub-units, which we will address in Section 4.3.

3.2.5. Facilitating organizational change

Increased attention has been paid to organizational transformation and the question of how individual institutions facilitate organizational learning and change towards greater adaption of PRME (Godemann et al., 2011; PRME, 2012). Structural change often involves advocating PRME related issues through centres and the establishment of working groups, committees and task forces either at the level of the management education institution or the related university. Signatories report on various transformative efforts, mostly around reviews of teaching, research and organizational practices, greater engagement with organizational members, extended partnerships with external stakeholders, and staff development. However, it should be noted that the manifestation of interdisciplinary collaboration and curriculum innovation appears to take place gradually and vary in scope and depth according to where the organization is in the implementation of PRME (Godemann et al., 2011; PRME, 2012).

With regard to advancing PRME implementation, there is a strong view of SIP reports being instrumental for managing the implementation process and supporting organizational change as well as enhancing the overall value of belonging to the PRME community through sharing experience. The Inspirational Guide (PRME, 2012) provides several examples from the field which illustrate SIP reports being used in gaining momentum in business schools' efforts to implement PRME and in driving discussion of what might still need to be done; raising awareness among, engaging and motivating faculty/staff/students; serving as a catalyst for change and enhancing organizational learning; periodically monitoring progress and benchmarking organizational activities through key performance indicators and target setting; and enhancing visibility and stakeholder engagement. As this list shows, the SIP reports are viewed by PRME and its signatories as closely related with the internal management and change process to implement PRME (hence, its inclusion into the Inspirational Guide chapter on 'Managing and consolidating PRME efforts').

There are also some emerging links between schools and stakeholder engagement standards such as the AccountAbility1000 series (Godemann et al., 2011) and reporting standards such as the Global Reporting Initiative guidance document (PRME, 2012). Overall, participating in the PRME initiative is felt to enhance the formalization and development of strategic integration of social responsibility and sustainability (Godemann et al., 2011; PRME, 2012).

4. Prospects

Having reviewed developments and achievements in the core areas of the 6(+1) Principles, we turn to some issues affecting current and future directions of the Initiative. We discuss its prospects with reference to 'Institutionalization and self-governance', 'Transparency and accountability', and 'Organizational and institutional embedding'.

4.1. Institutionalization and self-governance

The PRME Secretariat has taken a number of initiatives to institutionalize the Initiative. For example, it has supported events

to encourage PRME's implementation at national and international levels (e.g. workshops on integrating sustainability into business schools, greening management education, PhD career development in CSR) as well as those dealing with broader PRME related topics (e.g. sustainable business practice, responsible investment). With the support of PRME participant institutions, the PRME Steering Committee and other strategic partners, the Secretariat has organized the 2008, 2010 and 2012 *Global Forums for Responsible Management Education* in order to take stock of the initiative, to ensure that the voices of the signatories are heard, to encourage the signatories to 'take ownership' of the initiative, to generate traction and outreach, and to provide overall direction to the initiative.

PRME Steering Committee members have also organized global PRM E Summits in 2011 (in collaboration with EFMD and GRLI) and 2013 (in collaboration with CEEMAN). The PRME Secretariat's efforts, in conjunction with its strategic partners and others have contributed to greater awareness for responsible management education. Moving from this initial to a more advanced phase the initiative has started to focus on refining and promoting the concept of responsible management education.

Greater institutionalization has also been achieved through the development of a self-governance and partnership structure in recent years. This includes small changes such as the introduction of a small financial service fee to support administrative operations and more substantial initiatives such as the self-governance around regional and topical partnerships.

Since 2009/10 there has been a series of *PRME Regional Meetings* and their number is growing with an increase in number of signatories and countries represented. The concept for *Regional PRME Chapters* has emerged out of these regional meetings and has been officially endorsed as an outcome of the 3rd PRME Global Forum for Responsible Management Education at Rio+20 in 2012. Their aims are to enhance collaboration, dialogue and learning among PRME signatories on a regional level and between national/regional PRME signatories and stakeholders, in particular business participants of Global Compact Local Networks; to provide a platform for adaptation of the principles into the local context; to increase the visibility of PRME and its signatories in a region; and to develop and promote activities linked to the principles. The first Regional PRME Chapters established are Australasia, Brazil (in conjunction with Global Compact Local Network Brazil), Ireland and UK (with UK as the country with the highest percentage of signatories), and Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Emerging PRME Regional Chapters include Asia, German-speaking countries (DACH), Latin America, and Nordic countries. These measures stress the expectation of increased participation in PRME worldwide and the hope of better engaging in the world's largest economies (e.g. China, India, Indonesia) whose management education institutions have are conspicuous by their absence from the Initiative.

Another indication of greater institutionalization of CSR is the growing number of *PRME Working Groups* which deal with various PRME related *topics*. They include conceptual elements of PRME (e.g. framework/concept of management education, sharing information in progress), issues of organizational implementation (e.g. integration of principles in executive degree programs) and various dimensions and topics of social responsibility and sustainability including ways of integrating them into learning and teaching (e.g. poverty, anti-corruption, gender equality, climate change).

The most recent development is the launch of a PRME Champions group, in which about 30 of the most active PRME signatories share their experience with the wider PRME community and lead on certain areas. The PRME Champions group is envisioned to work collaboratively to develop and promote activities that address shared barriers to making responsible management education *and* research a reality. The limited membership of the group will provide opportunities for intimate/off-the-record discussions around the challenges to implementing responsible management education at the Champions' own schools, as well as opportunities to serve as global trendsetters, more broadly.

Overall, the subgroups are designed to encourage more focused work on a variety of challenges. These include identifying, creating, and tracking benchmarks to support the implementation of responsible management education and research; establishing constructive dialogue with external stakeholders and key influencers; and promoting this collective knowledge throughout the wider management and leadership education and research community.

4.2. Transparency and accountability

The above shows that PRME currently concentrates on bringing new management education institutions into collaborative engagements, providing guidance and support for implementation, and developing a culture of active ownership among the signatories. As the initiative is in its early years, it seems sensible and important to seek buy-in from aspirational institutions, to aim for identifying best practice and to allow signatories to build their capacity for responsible management education (e.g. through Leadership/Working Groups or Regional Chapters; see above). However, to be a long-term catalyst for actual change and protect the initiative's integrity and credibility, PRME also requires that its signatories demonstrate that they are living up its aspirational Principles, which put *transparency* at the center of the initiative.

SIP reports are viewed as vital in enhancing transparency about signatories' experience and progress in integrating social responsibility and sustainability into their organizations. They can enable stakeholders to have regular accounts of achievements made by the signatories. As the studies into self-presentations show, there is a will to share information among signatories. This even takes the form requests for facilitated information-sharing among signatories in SIP reports for mutual learning (Godemann et al., 2011). Many management education institutions seem to find SIP reports useful and take a closer look at other SIP reports for inspiration and as benchmarks (PRME, 2012).

Following the example of the UN Global Compact, in 2013 PRME delisted 25 management education institutions from the Initiative for failure to meet the mandatory reporting requirement. This is seen as enhancing the initiative's credibility and transparency, and aimed to recognize those signatories with a strong commitment to sharing experience among the network through regular reporting.

Relatedly, and as in other UN initiatives (e.g. UN Global Compact, UN Principles for Responsible Investment), we expect more debate about signatories' possible contribution to, and necessary measures for supporting, development of SIP from signaling engagement to representing a stronger form of accountability. At the moment, there is a perception that SIP reports can serve enhanced accountability of signatories (PRME, 2012). However, multiple roles are attributed to SIP reports, including:

- a critical part of an open learning and sharing network (see above),
- an internal management, communication and benchmarking tool for continuous improvement as well as organizational learning (see above and former section),
- a stakeholder communication tool to showcase competitive advantage, and
- a positioning tool along with a group of exclusive peers (Alcaraz, 2010; PRME, 2012).

It appears unlikely that a SIP report can satisfy all of these expectations at the same time and also become an evolving

accountability mechanism which allows for observing signatories' progress more deeply. Hence, there is likely to be further debate about the Initiative's role in enhancing social accountability of the management education. Additional pressures for enhanced accountability can be expected from other institutional actors as we will outline in the next section.

4.3. Institutional and organizational embedding

We conclude our reflection on the Initiative's prospects with some thoughts on PRME signatories' institutional and organizational embedding and their relationships with other actors (e.g. ranking organizations, accreditation bodies, governments, other higher education initiatives). In contrast to the areas discussed above, which reflect intra-Initiative dynamics, this theme relates to the influence that the institutional and organizational embedding of PRME can have on its broad vision; to foster a more responsible economy and society.

We first consider how _ranking organizations_ can favor the PRME agenda and influence the integration of social responsibility and sustainability into management education. We found that the Aspen's Beyond Grey Pinstripes Index influenced the way in which business schools reported their integration of environmental and social considerations in core MBA course offerings (and in faculty research). However overall, there is a surprising lacuna of rankings which go beyond the general MBA rankings' focus on employment and salary statistics. Following the termination of the Aspen Institute ranking in 2012, MBA students are left with only few authoritative sources of information about MBA programs which incorporate social responsibility and sustainability considerations (e.g. the QS Global 200 Business Schools Report CSR Rating, Bloomberg Businessweek's Top MBA Programs by Specialty: Sustainability, the Corporate Knights's MBA Report). It remains to be seen if the Aspen Institute Index will be revived or whether an alternative appears.

Given the role rankings play for marketing and attracting students in management education institutions, it might be reasonable to assume a continued interest and participation in these types of rankings, notwithstanding their shortcomings (e.g. methodological, organizational resources). With wider involvement in PRME and similar initiatives, some of these problems might be obviated as management education institutions would increasingly recognize the value of systematic data gathering and reporting.

Overall though, the key challenge remains that of integrating responsible and sustainable business indicators into _Financial Times_, _BusinessWeek_ and _The Economist_ business school indexes. This would be expected to encourage management education institutions to mainstream social responsibility and sustainability in all of their teaching programs (i.e. beyond MBA programs).

Recent years have also seen significant changes to the standards of some _accreditation institutions_, including the three international accreditation schemes developed by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the European Foundation for Management Development (EFDM, with its European Quality Improvement System/EQUIS), and the Association of MBAs (AMBA). These three accreditation bodies, collectively known as the 'triple crown', have begun to strengthen the place of ethics/social responsibility/sustainability/risk management integration in their accreditation standards and criteria. Accordingly, we would expect more management education institutions to be motivated to collaborate with and sign up to PRME in order to demonstrate to the accreditation bodies that they are engaged with issues of businesses' social impact and can benefit from membership of a leading learning community.

Besides emphasizing 'ethics, sustainability, and the global market place' in AACSB's revised standard, the accreditation body

also requires greater articulation of the societal impact of research. This reflects our observations that more attention might need to be paid to a PRME related research agenda. The increasing role of 'impact' is also reflected in the UK's government current research assessment strategy for the evaluation period 2008–2013 (Research Excellence Framework). It is reasonable to assume that these changes will be conducive for a broader understanding of and interest in articulating and reflecting research impact within and beyond the PRME community. The role of governments in encouraging and supporting responsible management education is however seen to be much broader. Accordingly, the Initiative is encouraging policy frameworks for higher education which encourage and incentivize the vision and objectives of PRME (e.g. through funding programs and schemes, and facilitation of exchange and debate) (see PRME's Rio Declaration).

Perhaps the most powerful form of institutionalization of the Initiative's principles will be when companies and business associations endorse them and indicate their preference for graduates who have been educated in Schools which adopt these. Turning to the _organizational context_ in which PRME can be implemented, we first note a mix of organizational types which sign up to PRME. For example, signatories of PRME can be faculties, colleges or departments of universities with a varying degree of autarky and organizational embedding in the related university or stand-alone schools for management and business. Some signatories are private or public, some teach only business while others integrate a broader range of disciplines. Our review of the studies into signatories' self-presentations shows that there is variety of interact of the signatories with the related university and/or other (sub-)units. It is possible that as a result of involvement in the PRME management education institutions will act as innovators within their overall organization by bringing the themes of responsibility and sustainability into the wider university. Equally, business schools can benefit from university level commitments to other initiatives and declarations in the field of higher education for sustainable development.

This raises two important questions with regard to the future direction of the initiative. First, how can we improve our understanding of how the Principles can be implemented within the interacting field of units and subunits? Secondly, given that PRME recognizes that a growing number of signatories sign are universities not schools, how do PRME and other higher education sustainability initiatives relate to each other? Can they be integrated to meet the broad responsibilities of higher education institutions for a more sustainable world?

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to provide a description of the PRME initiative and set out some markers of where the Initiative is, where it has come from, and where it is going. Our paper points to a growing formation and institutionalization of what might will be seen in the future as a key catalyst for the transformation of management education to support a more responsive and responsible economy.

We consider that the signatories' self-presentations enable progress by providing an overview of PRME implementation and raising opportunities for further reflection, development and discussion. PRME has emerged in response to the need to reassess the purpose of management education and its role in equipping a new generation of organizational leaders. The evidence seems to suggest that there is a growing commitment to this end and that this has entailed considerable developments as Schools focus upon the PRME objectives.

However, our synthesis of the empirical findings and case reports also shows that there is scope and need for further research. For

example, we yet know little about the extent to which PRME related goals are integrated consistently among the learning offerings of individual organizations and how to achieve this. How can objectives, outcomes and lasting impact be achieved? Whilst the vast majority of signatories appear to embed social responsibility and sustainability within all areas of teaching, research and operations, most emphasis is placed on teaching – the core interest of the initiative. This seems logical but also raises questions about how to further strengthen areas perhaps not fully explored yet. Research seems to be such a significant area, particularly in an educational environment where teaching is often led or at least influenced by research.

Our overview of institutional and organizational developments shows that several actors have begun to embrace the challenge of shifting the sector's environment towards better recognition of and support for responsible management and leadership education. As PRME not only represents a growing international community of management schools but also a growing network which involves some of the most important international associations in the field of management and management education, it is to be hoped that it will encourage further collaboration and commitment to realizing this emerging vision.

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