



2017 Global Forum for Responsible Management Education 10 Years of PRME

MAKING GLOBAL GOALS LOCAL BUSINESS: Bringing the SDGs to Every Classroom and Every Organization

Outcomes Declaration

We, the representatives and stakeholders of the business and management schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) meeting at the 2017 Global Forum for Responsible Management Education – 10 Years of PRME of the UN-supported Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, held at UN Headquarters and at Fordham University in New York City, USA, from 18-19 July 2017, reaffirm our commitment to the role that responsible management education has in society towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We marked the 10th anniversary of the creation of the PRME Principles and reviewed and celebrated ten years of work of the network of organizations in the PRME community, while reflecting with some concern on the fundamental changes occurring around the world that will shape the future of our work. We note and are proud that today 668 HEIs in 86 countries have committed to the PRME Principles and are active in PRME's 14 regional Chapters, Working Groups, PRME Champions as well as aligned networks, and will provide the basis for our work in the future.

We here summarize the learnings, results and impact of our journey so far. Based on our perception and evaluation of the global situation and challenges, we outline our roadmap for responsible management education for the future. We address strategic partners and outline the cooperation and support that we offer and request from them.

Given the fragile state of the planet, of peace and of the global economy, we are convinced that academia and science have to play an active role. We are highly committed to ensure that our business and management schools and HEIs actively contribute to achieving the challenges outlined in the SDGs, so that sustainable development becomes the prevailing paradigm.

Our vision and outlook for 2030—in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals—is a world where extreme poverty is eradicated, all human beings are able to fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, the human rights of all are realized, gender equality is achieved, the planet is protected from degradation, urgent action has been taken on climate change towards achieving the Paris Agreement to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit the rise to 1.5°C, and to achieve net-zero emissions in the second half of this century, and all live in peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. Business and management education will be designed to help make this new reality happen and sustain it into the future.

We deliver this Outcomes Declaration to representatives of the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development meeting at the UN Headquarters on 19 July 2017.

1. Ten Years of PRME: The Initiative's Journey So Far ¹

After ten years PRME is a well-established initiative for responsible management education and for integrating sustainable development into higher education, research and engagement.

Thirty years ago the *Commission on Environment and Development* (Brundtland Commission) published the report *Our Common Future* and formulated the often-cited definition for Sustainable Development, which is still guiding our activities today: “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

In 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, Agenda 2030). Together with the six PRME Principles, the SDGs have become the fundament of the PRME initiative and guided our strategic review process in 2016, resulting in an updated mission statement: *Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals through responsible management education*.

To fulfill this mission, the PRME initiative's Steering and Advisory Committees have defined three focus areas for the coming years:

- Align all the activities of the PRME initiative in support of achieving the goals and targets of the SDGs.
- Increase our impact as a community of business and management schools and HEIs by cooperating more intensively with the business community (especially through strategic links with the UN Global Compact and its sister initiatives the Principles for Responsible Investment and the Global Compact Cities Programme) and with youth, including our students and student organizations.
- Strengthen the PRME initiative through quantitative and qualitative growth and financial resilience.

At the 2017 Global Forum we discussed this strategic orientation, reaffirmed it and encouraged the PRME Secretariat and the Steering and Advisory Committees to help support us as PRME signatories in its implementation in close cooperation with relevant networks and stakeholders.

2. Global Context and New Challenges for Higher Education Institutions

Since the last PRME Global Forum in 2015 the global movement on sustainable development has seen some remarkable progress: The UN General Assembly has adopted the SDGs (Agenda 2030), which is providing clear guidance on the core sustainability challenges. The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP21) in Paris succeeded in formulating the Paris Agreement that has already entered into force and provides the framework for decarbonizing the world economy within the next decades, driving coordinated action among national, regional and local actors including governments, investors, businesses and others.

However, while our discussions in New York take place, fundamental changes are occurring around the world that are challenging peace and prosperity as well as academic learning, teaching and research. Concerned about growing protectionism, nationalism and populism on the global stage, the PRME community issued in February 2017 a statement (*In Defense of Universal Values and Principles as Preconditions for Responsible Management Education*²) to speak out against any form of discrimination related to religion, ethnicity or nationality, which is against the fundamental principles and values on which our societies as well as educational and research activities are based. We reiterated that:

¹ For more details on the history of PRME see Appendix.

² http://www.unprme.org/news/index.php?newsid=447#.WLbh2_LDElg

- Our global community has thrived on the commitment and the ideas brought by people from around the world. We contribute to global knowledge through the free movement of students, teachers and researchers.
- As a UN-backed initiative, we are speaking up to defend universal values and principles of the United Nations, namely equality, non-discrimination, freedom, and diversity. We are convinced that these values and principles are one of our greatest strengths.
- Scientific progress depends fundamentally on an open exchange of ideas, scholars and students. To meet global challenges like climate change that are threatening our lives and those of future generations, we must depend on a science-based system of evidence and a clear set of values.

The current global situation creates a new level of uncertainty and an increasing demand for orientation. Therefore, dialogue and partnership are important – but also research and new ideas. These are the core of the PRME community’s activities. Based on the PRME Principles and the SDGs, we influence strategies for companies in this fundamentally changing environment and prepare students and graduates to become drivers of this disruptive change. We are aware that HEIs have an important role to play and we are committed to live up to this responsibility.

3. Our Results and Commitments

In such a complex environment, business and management schools and HEIs are confronted with the question as to how best to prepare graduates for their careers and for responsible decision making in companies and other organizations.

What learning goals, which methods and what kind of research and partnerships contribute to solving the great challenges as outlined in the SDGs? In this context, what is the specific role of the PRME initiative?

We are committed to enhancing the quality of the PRME initiative through leadership at many levels: as individuals, as institutions, as groups of institutions, as a community, and through collaboration with other stakeholders both locally and globally.

Here we outline our concrete commitments for the PRME initiative’s next decade on these levels:

- **Shared mission:** We commit to contribute to achieving UN goals, specifically those outlined in the SDGs for the next decade – making each of our individual efforts more coordinated, visible and effective. We are the world’s largest initiative for management and business education directly backed by the UN, which gives us a clear direction and impact, especially in the context with our sister organizations UN Global Compact, the UN-supported Principles for Responsible Investment, and the Global Compact Cities Programme.
- We have explicitly recognized since PRME’s inception that “we understand that our own organizational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.” We now formalize this commitment further by amending PRME Principle Two as follows:
 - **Principle 2 - Values:** We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula as well as in our organisational practices, the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

With this change we want to emphasize the importance of our own organizations’ practices as role models and to ensure that our own practices are consistent with what we teach and research. This is the first change of the Principles since they have been introduced in 2007.
- We commit to furthering close relations with our founding partners (business school associations and accreditation institutions) and in particular PRME’s Steering Committee members: The UN Global Compact, AACSB International, EFMD, AMBA, CEEMAN, AABS, CLADEA, ACBSP, ABIS and GRLI.

- We commit to grow our network of PRME signatories according to the quantitative and qualitative growth targets set in the 2016 strategic review of the PRME initiative.
- We commit to support the internal change process based on the experience that is incorporated in the “PRME Transformational Model”.
- We commit, through collaborative efforts, to provide forums that enable innovation in educating leaders for a sustainable world, committed and equipped to help achieve the SDGs.
- We commit to collaborating as academic partners with UN Global Compact Local Networks, facilitating and supporting dialogue and debate, and supporting local companies, governments, civil society organisations and other actors to take the actions required to further responsible business practice and the achievement of the SDGs. We commit to supporting companies to be more vocal in calling for governments to have the confidence to take action in support of achieving the SDGs where this is required.
- We note the continued growth in the number of HEIs using the Sustainability Literacy Test (Sulitest) – 61,667 candidates from 612 universities in 57 countries have taken the Sulitest to date. We also note that the test questions have been linked to the SDGs, and that a new specialized teaching module linked to the test has been created with UN DESA and Henry Mintzberg at McGill University. We commit to encouraging additional schools to use the test.
- We commit to support each other as PRME signatories in our efforts to contribute to achievement of the SDGs and in particular in our efforts to report on the SDGs and how this might be connected with PRME Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reporting. We note that a specific project is currently being undertaken in this regard and that recommendations will be put to the PRME Steering and Advisory Committees for decision in due course.
- We commend the PRME Secretariat for its efforts to enhance the link to the United Nations in the branding of the PRME initiative.

More specifically, during the 2017 Global Forum we highlighted some of our recent core activities:

- Regional PRME Chapter representatives reported how they cooperate with each other and on their impact on society and political decision making in their regions. Two new chapters have recently been established: in India and in Australia & New Zealand. A new chapter is also in the process of being established in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Existing chapters have been very active since the last PRME Global Forum. For example, the North American chapter has created a programme to integrate refugees into entrepreneurship, held a workshop on integrating the SDGs into business practices, and organised a student project partnering with Nike to investigate the company's integration of the SDGs into their operations. The Brazil chapter set up a working group on SDG integration and launched a manual here at the PRME meeting. The UK and Ireland chapter held their annual conference in Newcastle with delegates from all over the world and partnered with the UK Global Compact Local Network to host 11 events on business and the SDGs in cities around the UK. The Nordic chapter has created a collaborative PhD programme on CSR in the Nordic context delivered by three member universities and with input from all Nordic PRME members. The Germany, Austria and Switzerland chapter hosted the 2016 Responsible Management Research Conference focused on the SDGs. The Latin American chapter organised an event in May and are hosting a second in September. The Middle East and North Africa chapter is organising a conference next April in Dubai.
- The group of Highest Executives of PRME signatories met and discussed actions to explicitly connect the SDGs to the mission statements of business schools, actions to further faculty development to build faculty competence and motivation to research and teach on business and the SDGs, and actions to further engage with businesses, students and other stakeholders on the SDGs. The group also reported on a new tool developed to enable business and management schools and HEIs to measure and report on their contribution to the SDGs.
- PRME Working Groups reported on their activities. The earliest PRME working groups that were established included groups on Anti-Poverty, Anti-Corruption and Gender Equality. These groups reported on events organized and research projects, books and toolkits published. More recently established working groups on Business and Human Rights, Business for Peace, and Climate

Change and Environment reported on work establishing new research projects and new journals, editing new books and developing teaching resources.

- The PRME Champions Group presented their activities and results. These included: the *SDG-Roadshow* project in the UK organized in partnership with the Global Compact UK Local Network with 11 events hosted for businesses and academics in different UK cities; the CR3+ Group's work hosting annual conferences and other activities engaging UNGC companies and PRME signatories in advancing the SDGs; the Sustainability of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean research project; the Sharing Vocabularies for Values-Driven Business research project; a project focused on developing student sourced, open-access wikis on SDG-related concepts; the Take One Step initiative engaging students in the SDGs, and the Breakthrough Innovation Challenge initiative in cooperation with Global Compact LEAD.
- Participants and project leads of the PRME SDG Student Engagement Platform reported on several projects aimed at increasing student engagement with the SDGs, including the Breakthrough Innovation Challenge, the Aim2Flourish initiative, the Oikos-PRME Research Hub, the GOWI free online course initiative, and the Sustainability Literacy Test (Sulitest).

A full list of further commitments will be published later as an Appendix of the Declaration. These will be on the following three relevant levels:

- Individual ("I" – individuals)
- Institutional ("We" – individual institutions)
- Collaborative ("Groups of institutions")

4. Partnerships and Coalitions to Accelerate Change

We have outlined what we in PRME as an initiative can and are committed to do. Here is what we would like to request from our partners:

- Governments: Formulate national SDG Action Plans in cooperation with key stakeholders, including academic institutions, and define effective actions, including through regulation, to internalize external effects and reduce carbon-emissions and other human-based factors that negatively impact the future of mankind and the Earth. Support HEIs in their activities toward achieving the SDGs and cooperate with PRME as well as its regional Chapters.
- Companies and SMEs: Cooperate with PRME signatory HEIs in educating the responsible leader of tomorrow. Introduce an internal carbon price and reform governance structures to prevent unethical or unlawful behavior in order to fulfill the promise of corporate citizenship. Seek partnership with schools on experiential learning initiatives that support the achievement of the SDGs.
- Accreditation institutions: build on the important role you already play in encouraging schools to consider their responsibilities and social impact by creating tools to support accreditation panels to scrutinize PRME and SDG focus areas in more detail during accreditation review processes.
- Ranking organizations: Modify ranking criteria to integrate a PRME and SDG focus.
- Student organizations: There are many very active and competent (international) student organizations working to encourage students to have a greater appreciation of sustainability issues. These organisations are important coalition partners and we call on these organizations to continue working together with us.

- Media: It is not easy to catch media attention for change processes in business education. Most of it is not very spectacular. We ask for more pro-active cooperation.
- NGOs / CSOs: Cooperate with PRME signatory HEIs in educating the responsible leader of tomorrow. Seek partnership with schools on experiential learning initiatives that support the achievement of the SDGs.

Endorsed by the participants of the 2017 Global Forum for Responsible Management Education – 10 Years of PRME of the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, held alongside UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York City on 18 to 19 July 2017.