Sharing Information on Progress (SIP)

2014 - 2015

Universidad EAFIT
Business School
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Sharing Information on Progress
(SIP) 2014-2015

Report on the implementation of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)
December 2013 - December 2014

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Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) regarding the Principles for Responsible Management Education.

It is our privilege to submit our second annual SIP where we publicly report how we have advanced PRME implementations during the last year.

The Universidad EAFIT School of Business in Colombia is aligned with the institution’s mission to serve and contribute to our community’s development, as well as with the personal values of our University’s President for whom values such as integrity and inclusion are priorities. Our university is an active reporting member of the Global Compact since 2011, and has been recognized as a leader in the dissemination of its principles. Our School plays an important role in this.

As the new Dean of the EAFIT Business School, I have found that our school is not only committed to, but enthusiastic regarding the principles for responsible management education. Ever since it was founded over five decades ago, our school has been committed to strengthening a dialogue with our stakeholders, and to integrating these principles into our core activities: teaching, research and outreach. I am a strong believer that my role in the school is to support and encourage the brightest members of our academic community to pursue their goals for the betterment of business, science, society and the planet. As a business school, we are convinced that through science-based civic engagement we can make an important difference for businesses in our local community, and eventually in other parts of the world. We would like our school to be domestically and internationally
recognized for doing good in the right way, with technical rigor, but especially with managerial and citizen-focused criteria and a strong sense of our social, environmental and economic impact. In other words, we want to model conscious responsibility in and for the world we want. We believe this will make us relevant today and sustainable in the long term.

As a final comment, we would like to ratify that we are committed to advancing each PRME principle through teaching, research and service. The School will continue to expand and to be publicly accountable for the principles for responsible management education in its curricula -incorporating pedagogies including experiential and service learning-, in the events we organize and participate in; and in our research agenda.

Yours faithfully,

Manuel Esteban Acevedo-Jaramillo
Dean
Business School
Principle 1: Purpose

Develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for society.

During 2014, the Management department’s academic area of Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility was completely reformed. This reform was aimed at including a clear sustainability orientation from a UN Global Compact perspective. During 2015 a re-designed course based on the Global Compact and addressing PRME principles was implemented for both undergraduate and MBA programs. The new version of this course has strong scientific foundations, but places stronger emphasis on “the business case for CSR”. Aiming to strengthen the role and importance of ethics and CSR for business, 5 new adjunct lecturers with CSR managerial responsibilities in large organisations were hired specifically for this course. The course also incorporates strong service-learning and experiential learning (through volunteering) components.

The content and activities of courses that fall under the Management Department’s Strategy area (“Strategy”, “Business Policy”) have put emphasis on a comprehensive reflection regarding what falls under a manager’s scope, regarding both “being” and “doing”. Considering that managers have responsibility for defining and achieving organizational goals; and that these are reflected in the company’s contribution, through its products and services, to customers and society, a reflection on the principles and values that should guide the behaviour and decision making processes of managers is therefore necessary, aiming to complement their power with responsibility for their decisions and actions toward the organisation, its stakeholders and society at large. To achieve this, the academic area has 12 lecturers, all from business management backgrounds. Class activities are geared towards developing general -ethical commitments, commitments to the environment, society and culture and social responsibility- and specific skills -critical thinking and self-criticism, abstraction and synthesis capacities, self-employment, development of strategies and tactics, identification of functional interrelationships within the organization’s plan. Class methodologies include activities such as prior readings, workshops, case studies, forums with executives with extensive experience, research and analysis of strategy and management-related academic articles, senior manager interviews, business model development, among others.
Principle 2: Values

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.

The introduction to the Management Department’s “Environmental Assessment Project” course includes an important section on corporate social responsibility. Its aim is to raise awareness among students of the importance of achieving a balance between its three main factors (environmental, social and economic) as a triple bottom line.

The courses “Business Studies” and “Organizations and Managerial Thinking” were designed so as to help students develop critical thinking as future business managers. Specifically, for the past three years (since 2012), the “Business Studies” course has explicitly incorporated activities for the purpose of educating ‘responsible managers’. By analysing films (Inside Job, and The Wolf of Wall Street) students are encouraged towards reflection and analysis. We aspire to provide students with a critical perspective regarding dishonest dealings and abuses of power, law and the public trust, such as in the Colombian case of Interbolsa- Premium Fund.

The Management “Synthesis Seminar” for last semester Business Administration students, leads participants to think about themselves, their practices and values, and the responsibility entailed by their managerial role in public, private and nongovernmental organizations. In this seminar, students assess themselves on their contribution to the achievement of social and economic development and their commitment to their profession and the organizations they are involved in.
Principle 3: Method

Create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Pedagogical initiatives have been implemented in the academic area of “Operations Management” that incorporate ethics and corporate social responsibility into the curriculum. Specific emphasis has been placed on analysing and discussing sustainability and ethics in supply chain management as a strategy for maximizing economic benefits. It also includes discussions on the current social, environmental and economic consequences of outsourcing to less developed countries, the use of cheap labour, and the effect of being a part of a “race to the bottom”. The reputational impact of these practices on the market is also appraised in the class.

To increase learning effectiveness, a decision was made to foster experiential learning that would help develop competencies in and broaden the mind of future managers. This is why the “Living the Factory” initiative was designed by the Management Department. The “Living the Factory” study tour aims to offer Colombian undergraduate students international experiences to both complement their classroom learning objectives and develop international competences in demand in the labour market for future international operations managers. The “Living the Factory” experience has been documented and has been published internationally: Escalante, Juan Esteban & Uribe, Ricardo (2014) Living the Factory: Experiential learning for International Operations Managers training. In: Taras, Vasyl & Gonzalez-Perez, Maria Alejandra. The Palgrave Handbook of Experiential Learning in International Business. Pp. 585-596.
Principle 4: Research

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.

During 2014, the Business School continued to move towards research leadership and international visibility with the publication of two co-edited volumes containing contributions from every continent, with chapters devoted to the Global Compact, a foreword by Georg Kell, Executive Director of the Global Compact, and one chapter by Jonas Hartle, PRME Director. These books are: The UN Global Compact: Sustainability in International Markets, and The UN Global Compact Beyond: Institutions and Lodging jointly published by the researchers Maria Alejandra Gonzalez-Perez and Liam Leonard, from EAFIT (Colombia) and California State University (United States) respectively.

At the Business School there are currently several specific research projects on sustainability and business management. For instance, Sandra Liliana Palacio Velez’s research examines key success factors in the implementation of a Circular Economy with a focus on Corporate Social Responsibility. This research is expected to promote far-reaching implementations of this new business model.
Principle 5: Partnership

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.

In 2011, Universidad EAFIT joined the UN Global Compact. Since then we have been active in our local Colombia Global Compact Network. We have led and promoted, alongside multinational companies (multinationals) in our region, advocacy for long-term cultural changes that will help us become a more transparent and law-abiding society, committed to the environment, to a culture that respects human and labour rights, and to a collective fight against corruption.

Universidad EAFIT’s Procurement Department, Administrative and Financial Management, and School of Management, in alliance with large Colombian multinationals (EPM, Protección, ISA, ISAGEN, Postobón) in the city, have designed a Global Compact training program for developing “Responsible Suppliers”. This program was called the “Lecture on the Global Compact”.

This lecture was divided into four sessions of 150 minutes each (10 hours total) and was attended by 114 managers representing mostly SMBs. It had the goal of training professionals in understanding and applying Principles of Human, Environmental Rights, Corruption and Labour Rights through the lens of the Global Compact of the United Nations seeking their implementation in the institutions they represent, and their commitment to multiplying this effect throughout their supply chains.

This lecture was designed by a group of technical and managerial experts from companies active in the local Global Compact network and had professional and academic support from the School of Management at EAFIT. Presenters and speakers came from the National Government through the Office of the President of the Republic of Colombia; the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism; trade associations like the Andi; civilian organizations like the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI); Sintraisagen trade union; ICONTEC (Icontec); Corresponsables Spanish news agency; and current companies that have subscribed to the Global Compact (EPM, ISA, Isagen, Protección and Sura) along with EAFIT.

Registered participants received accreditation for participating in the Lecture on the Global Compact, issued by the Office of the Global Compact Network Colombia and the President of EAFIT. The lecture was recorded and
broadcast internationally online and was also used as teaching material for students.

Since 2013, the Colombian multinational ISAGEN and EAFIT have worked together on an initiative called “First Contact Pilot Program” to promote sustainability under UN Global Compact parameters amongst ISAGEN’s suppliers. This initiative promoted networking by fostering the integration of different sectors including academia, local organizations, and the private sector. This cooperation is thoroughly described in the following chapter:

Principle 6: Dialogue

Facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

The School of Management has different student-led research groups with missions and functions that focus on corporate social responsibility.

1. Trade, Investment and Development Observatory: A student-led research group created as a space for critical analysis, that disseminates articles addressing current issues of trade, investment and development applied mainly to emerging and developing countries. The United Nations Conference on Development (UNCTAD) inspires the perspective of its analysis. For the past two years, the Observatory has focused on analysing development issues, specifically the financing of the Post 2015 development agenda.

2. SIMPRO: A student-led research group focused on continuous improvement and process management. SIMPRO is made up of 40 students and alumni from different academic programs at EAFIT. This research group focuses its experiential work on local SMBs. One of its goals has been to train entrepreneurs in management areas. The process of integral training of SIMPRO members had the goal of strengthening and complementing skills learned in the classroom through learning by doing (experiential learning) and practicing service by developing personal and technical skills, increasing their individual and collective capacities in individuals and the community. The Spanish Foundation Corresponsables recognised SIMPRO’s work with entrepreneurs in the city of Medellin as one of 20 most outstanding proposals, out of 345 nominations from Latin America and Spain. SIMPRO also is responsible for EAFIT’s Corporate Advisory Office (Consultorio Empresarial) at EAFIT. This Office promotes a theoretical and practical space where University students and alumni can put into practice the knowledge acquired during their career. It operates as a Science-Workshop, and provides the foundations of Service-Learning. Program beneficiaries have been low-income micro-entrepreneurs who do not have the opportunity or the financial capacity to fund a professional consultancy. These entrepreneurs must have already created a company. The project slogan is “Hand in hand with employers”, which expresses the
essence of the project and the research group given its interest in contributing what they can in order have an impact on society.

In 2014, it was initiated a series of meetings with employers of alumni of our bachelor in Business Administration aiming to have a continuous dialogue in order to incorporate in our curricula content and competences to address labour markets requirements related to global social responsibility and sustainability. This initiative was lead by the Director of the Business Administration undergraduate programme.

During 2015, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and in partnership with public and private organizations there will be several academic events aimed at promoting the adoption and implementation of a sustainable development agenda. Under the direction of our University’s President, we are determined to remain the leading university in the region of Antioquia in terms of our commitment to the Global Compact, and a local implementation of the Post 2015 Global Development Agenda, working together with the business community to focus on the creation of shared value.