

2.5.2012

PRME

This is our **Sharing Information on Progress (SIP)**
Report on the Implementation of the **Principles for
Responsible Management Education**

Aalto University School of Economics Progress on the PRME

This is a progress report of Aalto University School of Economics describing the developments mainly after our previous report in 2010.

The activities reported as we expressed our commitment to PRME the first time in 2008 and our previous report are still valid. Research on Corporate Responsibility is active especially at the Department of Management and International Business. Corporate Responsibility is still an increasingly important topic both in the Bachelor's and Master's Programs and in the MBA programs.

This year we report again a few concrete activities and achievements.

Principle 1. In the area of general development of capabilities and values of our students we'd like to report the publication (in September 2011) of a new article-based **text book on responsible business** (in Finnish) by the Aalto-ECON research group on corporate responsibility together with its various partners. The book takes a very ambitious view on corporate responsibility, discussing in many ways the role of business in society and as such challenging the values basic assumptions of business. The speakers in the publishing event included representatives of a major company, Finnish Parliament, environmental organizations and academia.

Principle 2. Different activities for including Corporate Responsibility issues more broadly in various training modules have been continued. One of the examples was a critical approach to corporate activi-

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ties in the **CEMS MSc program strategy course**. The teaching was based on a short introduction and a case-based discussion on how CR could be more than just a managerial toolbox of certifications and codes of conduct, but instead thinking on how the company strategy really responds to the societal challenges. The experience was good as the students were very active in discussing the dilemmas of the case.

The Department of Communications has further developed its course on the **Communication of Corporate Social Responsibility**. During the last years, the course Communication for Corporate Social Responsibility has increasingly focused on how CSR is communicated both internally and externally, as well as the benefits and challenges of communicating about CSR activities to stakeholders. This is a radical change from the course's early years, when the main focus was on how corporate responsibility was communicated in CSR reports. Earlier, the course was entirely conducted as an online course, but since the 2011-2012 academic year, it has included 5 face-to-face sessions to enable an active sharing of ideas and student reflection.

Based on student feedback, the course has helped students understand the complicated nature of CSR communication in a world where people expect CSR action from companies, but tend to treat the communication of such activities with considerable skepticism.

A course on **Business-Society Relations in the Retail Value Chain** has for four years been part of the marketing MSc program. It has been attended by 30-50 students.

The course provides knowledge and understanding of how various stakeholders in nonmarket environments affect and are affected by business strategies in retail value chains. Issues of increasing importance for both business managers and marketing research, such as sustainability, social responsibility, consumer and business ethics, and government regulation, are addressed.

Principle 3. A totally new Master's degree program **Creative Sustainability** was introduced in the autumn 2010. It is a joint teaching platform of the Aalto University on sustainable design & business. It educates and boosts re-thinking in design and architecture, business management and industrial processes.

The program has started successfully and the first students are about to graduate. The program was ranked nr 7 by BestMasters.com within programs offering sustainable development and environmental management teaching. See <http://www.best-masters.com/ranking-master-sustainable-development-and-environmental-manage-ment.html?PHPSESSID=bbbfaad7f1b49c0d923d8ae2f686e938>.

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For the program three new teaching modules were developed: an introductory course of Corporate Responsibility in Global Economy, a reading seminar on Sustainability Politics and CSR and a project course for solving real problems of real clients. For further information: www.creativesustainability.info.

During the next academic year another new course will be introduced: Sustainable marketing and consumption.

Principle 4. The active research on corporate responsibility at the Discipline of Organizations and Management continues on three main areas: Corporate Responsibility and its impacts, Energy Innovation and societal transitions, and Base-of-the Pyramid –innovations for sustainable development. The whole research group of appr. 15 persons participates in the teaching activities in responsibility area either as course examiners or visitors. See http://management.aalto.fi/en/research/groups/responsibility/research_projects/.

Principle 5. The traditionally active contacts with Finnish business leaders and international contacts have been used actively to develop the curriculum. Especially for the new introductory module of Corporate Responsibility for all MSc students the experience of CR professionals was collected.

Business managers are also widely used as visitors on the responsibility management courses.

Principle 6. The raising issue of Degrowth, sometimes characterized as “Escaping from the economy”, is gaining importance in the public discussion in Finland. Research on this issue has been initiated and a public debate on Economic Growth vs. Degrowth was organized at the School of Economics in November 2011. The debate was attended by an audience of approximately 500 people.

A studia generalia program on sustainability issues under the Aalto University platform “Aino Studia generalia” was organized under the theme “Entrepreneurship and Sustainability” in the autumn 2011.

A project manager on sustainability has been appointed at Aalto University to develop the sustainable practices on all Aalto campuses. Issues like mobility and waste management have been developed through various projects. In addition the group assignments of the bachelor level corporate responsibility course in the Spring 2012 were collected under the theme of Sustainable Campus in order to enhance the awareness of the students of issues close to our own environment.