Introduction

ESPAE, created in 1983 as the first business school of Ecuador and based at Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral (ESPOL), emphasises leadership, innovation, entrepreneurship development, and application of information technology in business. ESPAE joined PRME in 2007 and signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Ecuadorian Chapter of the Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEMDES, in Spanish) in 2009. The objective of the partnership was to run a Breakfast Seminar series on Sustainable Business Development organised from August to October, addressing mostly environmental issues that the school does not currently include in the MBA programmes. The intended audience included faculty, students, alumni, and the business community. For 2013 the theme will be Social Innovation.

Challenges

Even before signing on to PRME in 2007, ESPAE had introduced a formal course in Social Responsibility in all master programmes, provided training for our faculty members, and encouraged faculty to discuss issues integrated in their courses. Although ethics and social responsibility were declared in our mission as a main axis, we realised that environment and sustainability as a whole were not addressed in the MBA courses. However, it was not possible to introduce a new course or make major changes in existing programmes. Consequently, in 2009 we decided to ask the Ecuadorian Chapter of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) for a partnership to develop a Breakfast Seminar series to address the missing topic, as a complementary extracurricular activity.

Actions taken

A CEMDES representative and the dean of the School meet early every year to plan the series. We design each event with two components: first, the topic (for example carbon emissions, water management, etc.) should be presented by a professor or other person proficient in the area and, second, a case from a company practice will be presented. In some cases, the executive or company representative shares the experience in a class in coordination with our professors.

For the first two years the School financed all of the activities. Since 2011, we have received sponsorship from companies, including past participants and business attendees.

Results

As of 2012, approximately 500 people have attended the series. Though students, alumni, and faculty from the whole university (not just the school of management) attend the series, the event has become a space for sharing businesses best practices in a collegial and trustful environment where business people feel comfortable sharing.
In 2012, the School was invited by CEMDES to become a member in a special category created for non-profit organisations. Both institutions recognise that the benefits largely exceed our investments, both time and money, and we plan to grow the activity and explore new areas of collaboration.

The impact of this partnership is twofold. First, the ongoing nature of the project allowed the School to circumvent restrictions in the curriculum through complementary extracurricular conferences, while simultaneously developing knowledge of local sustainability practices. Second, the series provides a space for industry leaders to disseminate practices and exchange experiences. Plus, the initiative strengthened the role of ESPAE as an advocate for responsible management in Ecuador.

The role of PRME/sustainability principles

The Principles help to:

- Facilitate the achievement of our mission
- Focus school decision and actions
- Signal our values to our community
### 2013 PRME SUMMIT – 5th Annual Assembly

**ESPAE/ESPOL**

**The business school learning from business**

- Facilitate dialogue with the business community