Introduction

Since its foundation in 1996, İstanbul Bilgi University has attempted to establish a cultural and scientific community that promotes tolerance and respect for a diversity of individuals with different lifestyles, beliefs and ways of thinking within the framework of contemporary universal values, while at the same time maintaining strong ties with all segments of society. In 2006, being part of the Laureate International Universities network, the founding premise of the University has become ‘to make education more accessible and affordable so that more students can pursue their dreams.’ The University holds a primary responsibility for providing, maintaining, and further developing an academic environment in which both students and faculty members are able to engage in learning and the production of knowledge at the highest level. Students at İstanbul Bilgi University benefit from the advantages of studying under 48 undergraduate, 38 graduate, and 15 associate degree programmes. The department of Business Administration has 33 full time faculty members teaching at 5 different programmes, namely Business Administration, International Finance, International Trade, Business Informatics, and a Dual Degree programme in Business Administration with the University of Liverpool.

Challenges

İstanbul Bilgi University has been a dedicated institution in educating responsible leaders of the future since its foundation. Deciding to take a more active part in the global initiative of responsible management education, in June 2009, İstanbul Bilgi University integrated the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) into its curriculum and research activities. Both the Department of Business Administration and the Master of Business Administration programme expressed their commitment to the Principles.

It has always been a priority for the Department of Business Administration to focus its educational activities on responsibility issues, such as sustainability, environment, human rights, labour standards, corporate citizenship, and anti-corruption. The PRME framework inspired our Department to further strengthen our role as a leader in dissemination of these values within the educational sphere, the business world, and the entire society.

We are proud to be part of this initiative and aware of our responsibilities towards ourselves and others in the betterment of our social and natural environment. In the light of our commitment to PRME, we strive to build a more responsive and caring future, through the works of our faculty, students, and alumni.

Actions taken

The Department of Business Administration formed a PRME working team consisting of 4 faculty members from operations management, statistics, economics and marketing backgrounds. The multi-disciplinary taskforce/working team held various in-depth interviews with faculty members of the Department from various subjects, such as accounting and finance, marketing, organisational studies...
and human resources, statistics and operations management. During these interviews, the team explained the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), and the Six Principles of PRME to the teaching staff. We tried to brainstorm and come up with ideas on how to integrate ethics, social responsibility, sustainability, governance, environment, human rights, labour rights, and anti-corruption topics in our curriculum. After these in-depth interviews, the faculty started to either include these topics into their syllabi as a separate week or integrate these concepts in their weekly chapters to be covered.

Moreover, we started to have guest speakers and movie screening activities (i.e. Manufactured Landscapes, Affluenza) open to all university students. The PRME working group started to organise a regular seminar series (monthly or bi-monthly) on “Talks on Responsible Management” in 2010, 2011, and 2012, such as:

- The Role of Nestlé Pakistan Ltd. for Rural Poverty Reduction through Capacity Enhancement in Livestock and Dairy Farming
- The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility Management on Creating Competitive Advantages and New Strategic Opportunities for Spanish Companies,
- Slow Food Movement Talk on Genetically Modified Organisms, Food Traceability, and Overconsumption of Food
- The Effect of Individuals and Corporate Actions on Nature, Society, and Future Generations by GreenPeace Mediterranean
- The Feminism of the Middle Classes: Gender Equality as a Relay for the Flexibilisation of the Labour Force

In 2011, our Department started a new involvement with the Turkish Ethics and Reputation Society (TEID) and had various guest speakers at the department, on such topics as:

- Integrity as a Management Tool, Combatting Corruption
- Sustainability and CSR practices at Coca Cola
- Sustainability and Reporting at Bilim Pharmaceutical company
- Business Ethics approach at Siemens and the Compliance Office

We believe these talks are important in presenting the real life application/practices of sustainability principles.

As a further real life example of how to adapt curriculum and content of the courses with sustainability and responsibility issues, a great deal of effort has been put into integrating PRME in the first year Business Administration courses, Experiencing Business in Society I and II. The topics selected are aimed to constitute a socio-political and intellectual background for the first year students who would be taking departmental and professional courses in the following terms. In this context, topics such as corporate social responsibility, ethics, environment, justice, employee rights and responsibilities, and
globalisation are introduced alongside introductory business administration topics. The courses also aimed at encouraging students to think about sustainable and environment friendly business practices.

Movies and presentations by experts from Turkish and global corporations, research companies and non-governmental organisations are some of major components of the course. At the end of the first semester, students form term project groups and prepare a corporate social responsibility project to be presented as part of a class competition. The second semester, students develop and present business plans in groups.

**Results**

It is observed that during the past two years, most of the students eagerly adopted PRME in their semester projects. The corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects are convenient practices for students to think about both administrative and social issues. Many CSR projects were about preserving the environment, providing health services to the disadvantaged segments of the society (poor, women, children, handicapped people, and the elderly), increasing awareness about genetically modified organisms, recycling of garbage, organic agriculture and renewable energy, adopting and providing livelihood to street animals, increasing women’s employment and helping financial sustainability of the women who have suffered domestic violence. It was very important for the faculty to see an increasing awareness by the students about incorporating these social issues into business practices.

**The role of PRME/sustainability principles**

- Integrate sustainability principles educate Responsible Future Leaders