Introduction

This case story highlights learning processes and fundamental change at Pforzheim Business School making responsible management education a core element of mission, strategy, programme portfolio, curricula and research. These changes over the last decade follow a holistic approach and involve all Six Principles of PRME.

Pforzheim University is a teaching oriented institution (i.e. not a doctoral degree granting institution) with an emphasis on integrating practical experience in learning, teaching and research. Management education at Pforzheim has included elements of Sustainable Development (SD) and Social Responsibility (SR) for a long time, e.g.:

- Elective “Environmental Economics and Management” mid 1980’s
- Lectures on Ethics starting in the early 1990’s
- First Eco-Balance of the university in 1995

As of 2000, a significant change started: We integrated SD/SR in our mission statement and started the conversion from ad hoc SD/SR elements to strategic orientation. Important steps in this process were:

- 2002 Strategic decision of University’s Supervisory Board to go for AACSB accreditation
- 2004 Formation of the Business School (faculty of 84 professors)
- 2005 New mission statement emphasising student focus and making “ethical awareness” a core element.
- 2008 PRME signatory
- 2011 Initial accreditation by AACSB in 2011
- 2012 Reformulation of mission, further strengthening SD/SR

Once we decided to go for AACSB accreditation, to become a mission driven institution with responsible management education as a core element of our mission, PRME came as a natural complement. Based on this strategic orientation, we work to continuously improve teaching, learning, and research. The case story illustrates this with some examples.

Challenges

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1 Revised Mission Statement 2012: “Our graduates are familiar with an increasingly dynamic global business environment, know how to handle the responsibilities involved and have sustainable success in their careers… Sustainable Development is a core subject in our school. Based on the demand of companies we enable our students to meet the challenges of an economic, social and environmental sustainable development in a global context.”
Pforzheim Business School

Responsible Management Education: Mission, Strategy, and Implementation

- How to put a B-School on a continuous improvement path to educate responsible managers and leaders who are able to address the challenges of sustainable development in firms and in society?
- How to integrate SD/SR aspects in all activities (holistic perspective)?
- How to make this process not only an episode but to embed it in the DNA of the organisation?

Actions taken

- Organisational change
  - Continuous Improvement Committee: Strategy based recommendations on concrete improvement activities
  - PRME Working Group: Proposals for next steps in implementing PRME
  - Stakeholder involvement (Advisory Board, student initiatives)
- Reallocation of resources (teaching capacity, staff, finance); recruiting faculty with SD/SR competencies
- Curriculum development: All bachelor students are confronted with issues of “Ethics and Social Responsibility” in semester 6 → next step: Add a basic compulsory course in the first semester. MBA curriculum includes sustainability management.
- Learning goals (outcome assessment): “Ethical awareness” as one of the general learning goals; outcome assessment to measure impact.
- Company projects (experiential learning): More student company projects, bachelor and master theses focusing on SD/SR issues (examples: MBA students with Bayer CropScience in India; local projects, like HELP)
- Research: Institute for Industrial Ecology (INEC) focusing on material and energy flow analysis. TDS Institute for Human Resources also focuses on aspects of SD/SR.
- Partnership and Dialogue (activities to increase transdisciplinary impact):
  - Website to share information (http://www.hs-pforzheim.de/De-de/Wirtschaft-und-Recht/Fakultaet/PRME/Seiten/Inhaltseite.aspx).
  - Participation in congresses and (CSR) fairs
  - Initiative for the foundation of a PRME Chapter DACH (together with University of Applied Sciences, HTW Chur)

Results

- Student perspective: More attractive for applicants; graduates with competencies and qualifications that support their long-run success in the labour market.
- Company perspective: Cooperation projects, research and graduates addressing SD/SR challenges from a multi-stakeholder and international perspective
Pforzheim Business School

Responsible Management Education: Mission, Strategy, and Implementation

- Institution perspective: AACSB initial accreditation (one of eight in Germany where more than 200 B-Schools exist) confirming our ability to educate high quality responsible managers and leaders
- National recognition improved (e.g. ranking results, Ethikum certificate)
- International partnerships and exchange with new opportunities for students and faculty
- New student initiatives (local chapters of UNICEF, sneep, REMedy)

The role of PRME/sustainability principles

- PRME (in combination with AACSB) provide orientation and guidance for the improvement process of our institution
- Helps to focus internal debates on mission, strategy, programme and curriculum development
- Inspires discussion with stakeholders (students, companies, Advisory Board, Ministry of Science)
- Supports co-operations, partnerships, exchange of ideas
- In sum: Implementing a new quality of responsible management education