



## 2015 Global Forum for Responsible Management Education – 6th PRME Assembly

### PRME Working Group: Poverty, a Challenge for Management Education

Wednesday, 24 June, 13.30- 15:00

Roundtable on

**Taking Stock and Looking Ahead: Gaps and Opportunities in Research and Teaching on Poverty Alleviation**

#### Working Group Commitment:

*Towards “zero” poverty through understanding the root causes and an action/impact oriented communication and collaboration.*

#### Round Table Agenda and Notes:

- Current status, existing gaps and new opportunities in research and teaching on poverty alleviation
- Lessons learnt and opportunities identified through previous Working Group (WG) activities, participants’ professional and institutional experiences, and reflections from the PRME Global Forum opening dialogues and laboratories.
- New ideas and proposals on the thematic focus and working methods for the future activities of the WG
- A Commitment Statement sentence to be presented in the Global Forum closing session

The WG roundtable took note of and acknowledged the Brief Description of the WG’s Main Activities and Deliverables in 2008-2015, as presented to the 2015 PRME Global Forum (see Appendix 1).

#### **Discussion:**

1. Poverty remains as the main concern and challenge for mankind. It is everywhere around us, both in the least as well as in the most developed countries
2. Although a global and phenomenon with some universal causes, poverty is also a contextual, complex and multidimensional issue regarding both its causes and manifestations
3. Poverty leads also to numerous other forms of non-income related discrimination
4. Businesses have to play an instrumental role in poverty alleviation
5. Business schools should further promote the business case for fighting poverty
6. Bringing poverty issues into management education requires changes in the educational content, process, actors involved (both students and faculty), as well in the institutional and organisational arrangements
7. Field work, company visits, action learning, community service and other forms of experiential learning and impact-oriented education provide opportunities for innovation, relevant learning and engaging students into practical solutions
8. Students should also be engaged in extracurricular activities during their studies, including in the low-income environments around their schools and/or in other countries, but also in poor urban areas, while also being encouraged to get involved in the relevant start-ups, social entrepreneurship, non-for-profit organisations, NGOs and various volunteering activities during and after their studies



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9. There are numerous experiences, best practices and inspirational solutions that need to be shared in order to further promote the integration of poverty-related issues into management education. Particularly important are inspirational stories on students' experiences and learning reflections
10. Business schools need to play a role also in bringing in other stakeholders, including from the public sector and different levels of government. Social responsibility is a concept that relates to all stakeholders.
11. A higher impact on poverty alleviation requires a higher level of communication and collaboration within and among different stakeholders

### Concrete ideas and proposals:

- i. Positive experience of bringing PRME down to 'real life' through experiential learning could be replicated and further built upon in other context and countries (WG members from India, Philippines and Peru expressed their willingness to host events similar to the [2014 Poverty WG Conference](#) held in Nicaragua which provided experiential learning through visit with local entrepreneurs)
- ii. WG members announced their willingness not only to share resources, but also actively contribute as to organising field trips and community service projects like the one in Ghana, which was described in the book "[Socially Responsive Organizations and the Challenge of Poverty](#)"
- iii. A survey among WG members will be conducted to identify student experiences and individual stories on successful projects that made a difference (e.g. like those reported from India, Argentina, USA and other countries), based on which an interesting publication could be made
- iv. In addition, a students' blog (within PRME or in collaboration with other networks) could be created to facilitate mutual sharing and learning
- v. UNCTAD is interested in publishing WG deliverables on their Business School for Impact online platform, as well as to keep business schools informed on the internship programmes for students willing to get involved in poverty alleviation projects and the related activities in different environments
- vi. WG and its members should continue its presence and participation in the events organised by major research and scholars' networks and other associations (e.g. AoM, EURAM, BoP Global Network, etc.) to further promote the idea of PRME and poverty alleviation, particularly from the point of view of what business schools could and should do about fighting poverty and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals
- vii. To further strengthen the internal communication and collaboration among its members, the WG will conduct another survey aimed at collecting new ideas on the thematic focus, work methods, organisational solutions, and communication platforms for the future
- viii. The WG will also extend its effort to improve communication and collaboration with other stakeholders, including with other PRME Working Groups, PRME Regional Chapters, and the UN Global Compact as a "natural" partner representing socially responsible businesses from around the globe
- ix. The upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> RME Research Conference on Inclusive Business should provide opportunities to continue the dialogue, further elaborate above mentioned proposals, as well as to collect new ideas.

### Conclusion:

- Despite the remarkable results achieved with the implementation of the MDGs, poverty remains as a major global concern and therefore the first among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- Business schools have an important role to play in fighting poverty, including through the creation of a new generation of business and other leaders that would be aware of the need for a new role of business in society and committed to the idea of sustainable development and responsible leadership



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- Particularly important is the role of business schools that operate in the regions in which the student body is expected to experience the highest growth in the future
- As articulated in its Commitment Statement, the PRME Working Group on Poverty a Challenge for Management Education is willing and ready to continue and further expand its activities, including through a more intensive communication and collaboration with other stakeholders

### Appendix 1:

#### WG main deliverables and activities, 2008-2015 - Report to the 2015 PRME Global Forum

- The [first survey on poverty and management education](#) was presented at 1<sup>st</sup> PRME Global Forum, 2008, while the second survey on [Poverty as a challenge for Management Education](#) was reported at 2<sup>nd</sup> PRME Global Forum, 2010.
- Deliverables for 3<sup>rd</sup> PRME Global Forum in Rio, 2012 included: [Report on Fighting Poverty through Management Education: Challenges, Opportunities, Solutions](#) and the Collection of Best Practices and Inspirational Solutions.
- [“Socially Responsive Organizations and the Challenge of Poverty”](#) as first in a series of two books on why and how to integrate poverty issues into management education, was published in 2014, while the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Management Education and the Challenge of Poverty” will go out in 2015. The call for a joint book [Beyond the Bottom Line: Integrating UN Global Compact into Management Education](#) was launched in 2015.
- The [Conference Notes and Proceedings](#) summarise the international experiential learning conference on *Leveraging Innovative and Cross-country Learning for Poverty Reduction: Climbing the Economic Ladder – Examples from and for Nicaragua, Managua 2014*.
- The presentations at the [research](#) and [teaching](#) sessions at 1<sup>st</sup> RME Research Conference, Chur, Switzerland, 2014 were published, while WG developed another track for [2nd RME Research Conference](#), Cairo, Egypt, September 2015.
  - To develop, produce and disseminate these and other deliverables, the WG applied diversified work methods and additional activities, including: a 3-round Delphi survey among WG members (2010/2011), focused workshops (Bled 2011 and 2013), two preparatory PRME sponsored webinars ([2011](#) and [2014](#)), “meet-the editors” sessions (2014), continuous dialogues with PRME Secretariat, collaboration and exchange with other PRME working groups and Regional Chapters, and participation at various international conferences and platforms (e.g. [AOM 2012](#), [PRIMEtime blog](#), [PRME 2013 Summit video stories](#), etc.).
  - During the process, the WG membership has continuously grown to include now **141 members** from **118 institutions** in **45 countries** around the globe.