**Introduction**

Strathclyde Business School is present in four different locations in the GCC: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman, and Bahrain. One of the key strategies of the School for the region is to enhance its presence and relevance in terms of local and regional stakeholders and to engage as much as possible with the communities within which it is situated. One of the chosen vehicles via which Strathclyde Business School engages with the wider community is the Strathclyde Dialogues series, which aims to bring together panels of experts who, by exchanging views and perspectives, promote the sharing of knowledge in various fields of contemporary interest, with global as well as regional applicability. The initiative has started at the United Arab Emirates regional centres (Abu Dhabi and Dubai) and is currently in its 3rd year. The “triple helix” model of interactions between the public, private, and academic sectors was chosen for the Strathclyde Dialogues and is a key criterion for panel member selection for each event. Sustainability is an overarching agenda for development with regional relevance, and related aspects are often discussed in the Strathclyde Dialogues series.

**Challenges**

The key challenges faced by the school, which led to the decision to commence this initiative, include:

(a) The drive to contextualise in a deeper way its regional presence;

(b) The drive to create interlocution with several local, regional and international stakeholders on trending contemporary societal, economic and business issues; and

(c) The need to provide the Strathclyde Business School students and alumni with a wider framework of debate and engagement, beyond the given academic load of taught/research components.

**Actions taken**

(a) Relevant propositions were discussed at the board level. Ways forward were decided, including the hosting of 3 events per year in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, with later expansion of the initiative to the other GCC regional centres.

(b) Intense stakeholder engagement took place, in order to identify key themes of interest for future events.

(c) A key principle identified was diversity in representation, which was addressed by implementing the “triple helix” model in selecting panel participants for each event.

**Results**

Several Dialogues have already taken place since the beginning of the Series. The events are usually well attended with audiences ranging from 30 to 120 participants per event. The Dialogues have sparked the interest of students and alumni, and have resulted in networking and deeper connections with regional and local stakeholders. Three of the most recent Dialogues have focused on issues of global responsibility and sustainability.
The December 2012 Dialogue focused on human capital in the Gulf region as an important focal point that plays a central role in the future development of the GCC economy. The alignment between human capital, labour policy, human rights practices and CSR initiatives were highlighted as important components of sustainability, scalability, and capacity building.

In May 2012, the Dialogue event focused on social entrepreneurship by circumscribing its remit for the region and synergies with the corporate world, which cannot always adequately address social issues. Sensitisation to such local issues, coupled with fostering the spirit of social entrepreneurship through mentoring, training and education starting at the primary school level were deemed as key factors in order to raise awareness and advance future engagement with the topic.

In March 2012, the event focused on highlighting current tensions in sustainability: inter-sectoral diversity in the economic activities of nations, prudent fiscal and monetary policies, and the right industrial climate for the development of a desirable mix of industries. An additional focus on social sustainability (the wellbeing of people) introduced an important aspect to the panel.

The role of PRME/sustainability principles

The Dialogues correspond directly to the remit of PRME’s 6th Principle (Dialogue) by attaining:

- Comprehensive representation and engagement with local and regional stakeholders;
- Focus on contemporary issues of global social responsibility and sustainability; and
- Awareness raising, sensitisation, debate, and addressing trends for large-scale adaptation and change.