

## **Cross-sector partnerships: Integrating and scaling RME and ERS practices**

**Prof Jennifer Leigh**, Kilian J. and Caroline F. Schmitt Endowed Chair & Professor of Management  
Nazareth College of Rochester, School of Business and Leadership

**Dr Jill Bogie**, Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria ([bogiej@gibs.co.za](mailto:bogiej@gibs.co.za))

**Prof Sheila Killian**, Assistant Dean, Research at the Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick and  
Director, Principles for Responsible Management Education

**Prof Carole Parkes**, Professor of Responsible Management, University of Winchester Business School

Business schools and universities perform a key role in the development of current and futures leaders and managers (Adams, Heijltjes, Jack, Marjoribanks & Powell, 2011) and many have made commitments to responsible management education (RME) and ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) practices. Almost 800 business schools around the world have committed to the United Nations principles of responsible management education (PRME) (UNPRME, 2019), to advocate for and actively work towards addressing the SDGs. These principles call for cross-sector partnerships between higher education institutions and business, so that they may work together to address these challenges (Waddock, Rasche, Werhane & Unruh, 2011).

However, very few business schools worldwide can claim to have integrated the SDGs and RME principles into their curricula, research and operating practices. There are questions around whether PRME (or RME more generally) is a driver of change (Burchell, Murray, & Kennedy, 2015), what actions are needed to engage with social and environmental issues (Parkes, Buono & Howaidy, 2017), and how to adapt curricula and research practices (Forray & Leigh, 2012). The PRME principles call for business schools to work together, to go beyond knowledge sharing and build broader partnerships with a range of stakeholders (Forray & Leigh, 2012; Burchell et al., 2015), to actively drive SDG integration, while remaining relevant to their business audience. As recent studies have shown, collaborations can develop into broader networks that are more inclusive and engage with civil society and local communities (Gray & Purdy, 2018). In doing so, such networked multistakeholder partnerships can develop stronger relationships with beneficiaries, build legitimacy and can lead to more effective and lasting social change (Quarshie & Leuschner, 2018).

Parkes et al., (2017: 62) advocate for business schools to be more ambitious in tackling the SDG agenda and for “building partnerships within and across our institutions and communities locally and globally” and Killian, Lannon, Murray, Avram, Giralto & O’Riordan (2019) demonstrate that there are opportunities to use XSPs for innovative ways to embed the SDGs into curriculum design. There is also a need for further research on XSPs and broader multistakeholder partnerships in the business school context, so that the influence of their activities can be amplified and achieve greater social impact (Adams et al., 2011; Burchell et al., 2015). We invite submissions that explore these opportunities and questions such as :

- How can business schools work together with diverse partners and stakeholders, locally and globally, to develop current and future leaders who are equipped to drive the SDG agenda?
- Responsible management education is a driver of change and business schools can take a lead role in championing the SDG agenda. How do business schools successfully leverage XSPs to achieve this ambition?
- How can XSPs be key enablers of transformational change and facilitate the process of embedding the SDGs in teaching and research practices in a way that is relevant to business?
- How can XSPs be applied in innovative ways, to integrate the SDGs and ERS principles into business school and university practices and in turn influence businesses to do the same?
- What is different (or similar) about wider networked forms of multistakeholder partnership that include local communities and civil society? How could a business school be influential in its local and global ecosystem to leverage, scale up or amplify its social impact?

## **References:**

- Adams, C., Heijltjes, M., Jack, G., Marjoribanks, T. & Powell, M. (2011). The development of leaders able to respond to climate change and sustainability challenges. *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*, 2(1), 165-171.
- Burchell, J., Murray, A. & Kennedy, S. (2015). Responsible Management Education in UK Business Schools: Critically Examining the role of the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) as a driver for change. *Management Learning*, 46(4), 479-497.

- Forray, J. & Leigh, J. (2012). A Primer on the Principles of Responsible Management Education: Intellectual Roots and Waves of Change. *Journal of Management Education*, 36(3), 295-309.
- Gray, B. & Purdy, J. (2018). *Collaborating for Our Future: Multistakeholder Partnerships for Solving Complex Problems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Killian, S., Lannon, J., Murray, L., Avram, G., Giralt, M. & O’Riordan, S. (2019). Social Media for the Social Good: Student engagement for the SDGs. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 17(3).
- Parkes, C., Buono, A. & Howaidy, G. (2017). The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME): The first decade - What has been achieved? The next decade - Responsible Management Education’s challenge for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *The International Journal of Management Education*, 15(2), 61-65.
- Quarshie, A.M. & Leuschner, R. (2018). Cross-Sector Social Interactions and Systemic Change in Disaster Response: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 150(2), 357-384.
- UN PRME. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.unprme.org/index.php>
- Waddock, S., Rasche, A., Werhane, P. & Unruh, G. (2011). The Principles for Responsible Management Education: Implications for Implementation and Assessment. In: D. Swanson & D. Fisher (Eds.), *Toward Assessing Business Ethics Education* (pp. 13-28). Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.