TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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"The school obligates academic teachers
to share their knowledge and experience
diligently with undergraduate,
graduate and doctoral students.
The school aims to be a model of organized conduct,
thus providing an example of application of knowledge
from the fields in which it teaches and conducts research."

[From the *Code of Ethics* of
the Leon Kozminski Academy of
Entrepreneurship and Management]

Abstract

The paper refers to the *Six Principles of Responsible Managers Education* approved at the Global Compact Summit, Geneva, 5th July 2007. It gives an opportunity to revisit issues related to educating practitioners, especially in business and management, presented earlier to many different circles. Both methodological issues and those linked to responsibility are highlighted in the paper. The paper refers to some of earlier works, even drawing on some of them, because the issues covered there not only have not become outdated, but also have actually gained relevance. Responsible business/management education involves, or ought to involve, not only the curriculum, i.e. lectures, classes, seminars, but also a good example of organization, a model that should be provided by the school as a kind of organization and management *clinic* in itself. Responsible education of managers is closely linked with global issues of contemporary and future economics if we wish it to be conducted in more ethical and responsible manner.

1. Introduction

Issues of methodology and responsibility unquestionably concern people who are being educated, but to an even greater extent they concern the world of education, that is, teachers as well as educational institutions and organizations. Primarily, this applies to management education which is situated on the borderline of economics, sociology, psychology, information technology and other disciplines that scientific knowledge is divided into. However, the division (dispersion) of scientific knowledge should not be transferred to the practice which uses that knowledge, as practice needs to be perceived as a whole. Wise physicians say one should "treat the patient, not this or that organ." This also holds true for "patients" whose "doctors" are managers, i.e. organizations undergoing improvement, which requires skillful use of the results of numerous analyses on which knowledge from the aforementioned disciplines is based, to prepare the syntheses necessary to develop appropriate practical solutions.

The direct inspiration for this paper came from Sarah Murray's "A degree of ethical leadership" published by the *Financial Times* in its January 14, 2007 issue. The writer pointed to the differences between the attitude that is increasingly being adopted as part of responsible business, namely commitment to fighting corruption, to sustainable development, compliance with employee treatment standards, environmental standards and social standards, and the attitude of university-level schools to these issues and their level of commitment to what is referred to as "responsible business/management education."

Responsible business/management education involves, or ought to involve, not only the curriculum, i.e. lectures, classes, seminars (I will return to this later on), but also a good example of organization, a model that should be provided by the school as a kind of organization and management *clinic* in itself. At a school that educates organizers, good organization should be something natural, a kind of "native tongue", just like their parents' language is the language children learn to use as they progress from infant to verbally skilled child. This is exactly how teaching for business, or teaching of organization and management, should differ from teaching any other practitioners, as the practical competence of managers requires not only knowledge but also skills that are acquired through the non-verbal influence of the units of business/management schools and the people they employ[1]. This requires the staff working at these schools, including administration personnel, to possess professional competence as well as the skills characteristic of a *reflective practitioner*. The cobbler's wife cannot be the worst shod; management schools have to be like doctors learning to heal themselves in order to know how to heal those they will serve in their professional practice.

2. Reflective practitioners and educating them

The term "reflective practitioner" was introduced by Donald A. Schön, the late lamented professor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It was during a stay in the United States as a Fulbright Fellow that I had the opportunity to see one of the non-medical *clinics*[2] (the engineering clinic at Clermont College[3]) that act as centers for educating professionals in *practical disciplines*, as Tadeusz Kotarbinski called them. Herbert A. Simon called them *the sciences of the artificial* – to distinguish between manmade objects and natural objects.

In the 1980s Donald A. Schön proposed[4] the original concept of the *reflective practitioner* as an attempt to describe the source of knowledge – it is the third source of knowledge – obtained from experience reflected upon by masters who combine theoretical knowledge – this is the first source of knowledge – with practical competence – this is the

[1] "All you ever needed to know about avoiding another Enron-style situation, you learned in kindergarten – or at least in graduate school." [Kuney 2004, 905].

[2] Opening the Polish Academy of Sciences' Science Studies Committee session on research hospitals (called "clinical hospitals" in Polish) as research and educational institutions, I said among other things: "The word clinic comes from Greek - *klinike* = the practice of caring for the sick at the bedside, from *klinikos* = the person taking care of a bedridden sick person, from *kline* = bed, *klinein* = to lean, to lie down [W. Kopalinski, *Foreign Words Dictionary*; in Polish, WP, Warsaw 1983]. Michael Foucault [1999] devoted a separate treatise to the beginnings of the clinic. Pointing to the science studies aspect of obtaining and passing on medical knowledge, this author wrote (invoking P. Pinel's *La medicine clinique*, 3rd edition, Paris 1815) that the number of questions one can pose is just as countless as the number of objects one can see. If the area of the clinic is open to all the possibilities of language or all the instances of seeing, then it is not limited, and therefore is not organized. It only has limits, form and meaning when asking questions and examining comes together, defining the 'meeting place' of doctor and patient thanks to a shared code.

Looking at the importance of a clinic as such and as a method, these issues would be hard to overestimate. The role and importance of research hospitals as research and educational facilities is essential for research and for educating future doctors as reflective practitioners. This role is also important as a model for educating reflective practitioners of other specialties. If it is true, as people are increasingly saying, that knowledge is a key resource, then a clinic as a place where knowledge is created and transferred is especially valuable, because it increases the resources of theoretical knowledge (the knowledge that) and practical knowledge (the knowledge how) to include the knowledge derived from *reflection-in-action* that has a strong cognitive base and is expressed in the appropriate language." [Gasparski 2000, 349-352].

[3] Cf. the profile of T. T. Woodson, director of the Engineering Clinic at Harvey Mudd College, *Design & Systems*; in Polish, W. Gasparski and D. Miller, eds., Vol. IX (1987), pp. 136-138.

[4] Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, Basic Books, New York 1983 and the same author's *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 1987.

second source of knowledge. "The professions have become essential to the very functioning of our society – writes the quoted author – We conduct society's principal business through professional specially trained to carry out that business, whether it be making war and defending the nation, educating our children, diagnosing and curing disease, judging and punishing those who violate the law, settling disputes, managing industry and business, designing and constructing buildings, helping those who for one reason or another are unable to fend for themselves. Our principal formal institutions – schools, hospitals, government agencies, courts of law, armies – are arenas for exercise of professional activity. We look to professionals for the definition and solution of our problems, and it is through them that we strive for social progress." [Schön 1983, 3-4].

Some professionals are so engrossed with the technicalities of their specialty that they are incapable of *reflection-in-action*. They are too good at using their technical skills to be able to turn away from them even for a moment. They are afraid of uncertainty, considering acknowledging it as a sign of weakness. Others more inclined to adopt a *reflection-in-action* attitude find it hard to express in words what they know in terms of *how to act*, they find it hard to substantiate that knowledge, ensure its proper quality and strict discipline. Thus it becomes extremely important, both from the point of view of science studies and from a practical viewpoint, to conduct research on *reflection-in-action*. This kind of reflective conversation with situations is provided by actions related to activity design or planning. That was why Tadeusz Kotarbinski pointed to *design* as the methodological identifier of *sciences* which he called *practical*, while Nobel Prize winner Herbert A. Simon pointed to the peculiarity of the *sciences of artifacts*, meaning manmade creations. According to all the aforementioned scholars, these sciences, which are also called applied sciences, include not only medicine and engineering, but also economics, management, law, pedagogy, etc. The expertise that specialists actively involved in these fields achieve is better, the greater the extent to which they are reflective practitioners.

Educating future reflective practitioners is extremely important[5]. Such education requires proper conditions. It should be provided in a place where trainees meet reflective practitioners in their respective professional competences. Donald A. Schön called such places the *practicum*. This term generalizes the method characteristic of medical clinics and applies it to other fields of professional education and research on *reflection-in-action*. What is the *practicum*[6]? It is a kind of workshop, laboratory, or more generally – "[…] a setting designed for the task of learning a practice […] a virtual world, relatively free of the pressures, distractions, and risks of the real one, to which, nevertheless it refers. It stands in an intermediate space between the practice world, the 'lay' world of ordinary life, and the esoteric world of the academy. […] Most practicums involve groups of students who are often as important to one another as the coach. Sometimes they play the coach's role. And it is through the medium of the group that a student can immerse himself in the world of the practicum – the all-encompassing worlds of design studio, a musical conservatory, or psychoanalytic supervision, for example – learning new habits of thought and action." [Schön 1987, 37-38].

Taking part (at my invitation issued on behalf of the Polish praxiological community) in the Warsaw conference "Praxiologies and the Philosophy of Economics" held in 1988, Donald A. Schön presented a paper calling for an epistemology of practice [Schön 1992]. He wrote: "Although our society has become thoroughly dependent on professions, so much so that the conduct of business, industry, government, education, and everyday life would be unthinkable without them, there are signs of a growing crisis of confidence in the

[5] I wrote about this earlier [W. Gasparski, 2006, 77-84]; that article and the present paper repeat certain fragments because they concern the same issue.
[6] This excerpt comes from [Gasparski 2003, 14].

professionals." [Schön 1992, 163]. „It is timely, then, to reconsider the question of professional knowledge. Perhaps there is an epistemology of practice which takes full account of the competence practitioner sometimes display in situations of uncertainty, complexity, and uniqueness. Perhaps there is a way of looking at problem – setting and intuitive artistry which presents these activities as describable and susceptible to a kind of rigor that falls outside the boundaries of technical rationality." [Schön 1992, 174]. „We should be turning the puzzle of Professional knowledge on its head, not seeking only to build up a science applicable to practice but also to reflect on the reflection-in-action already embedded in competent practice." [Schön 1992, 183].

3. The intellectual infrastructure of management knowledge

It is time now to deal with the *sui genesis* intellectual infrastructure of economics/management, i.e. the knowledge imparted to students during lectures and the knowledge contained in textbooks on subjects taught to economics students, and in particular the various sections under the general heading of "management." To this end, I would like to quote some excerpts from two of my earlier works. The first excerpt comes from a lecture I gave on the jubilee of the Economics Department at the University of Opole [Gasparski 2005], the other – from a paper presented at the Polish Economic Society in Warsaw during a conference on business ethics [Gasparski 2007].

3.1. Economical mechanicism

There is a widespread view in business that economics is a mechanism which transforms invested capital, natural resources, labor and intangible factors into what is generally referred to as a "return on investment," and that in addition this should be a return with a surplus. As a result, knowledge on developing such a mechanism and on its functioning, or economics as a science, is treated as a kind of engineering which is free of any other assessment than that performed in monetary units. Economics in such an approach is placed close to the exact or natural sciences for which physics is the model. This approach to economics moves it away from the sciences of culture and the related *humanistic factor* that Florian Znaniecki proposed as the distinguishing mark of those sciences[7].

A naturalistic approach to economics – though significant in the modern economy practiced on a global scale – fortunately is not the only approach. Nobel Prizes in economics are also awarded to economists who treat economics as the science of processes of exchange performed by people, or the science of purposeful conduct, i.e. of praxiological provenance. The purpose of business activity is the relation between producer and consumer, of which Adam Smith wrote a long time ago: "Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production; and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer. The maxim is so perfectly self-evident that it would be absurd to attempt to prove it." [Smith 1954, II, 355; quoted after Zabieglik 2003, 153].

Besides praxiological, i.e. efficacy-related dimensions (effectiveness and efficiency), like most human activity business activity is subject to ethical judgment reflecting the framework of social consent to the definition of goals and application of means to achieve

[7] This is what the Polish sociologist wrote: "The feature of cultural phenomena, objects of humanities studies, the fundamental property of theirs that as objects of theoretical reflection, they are already objects given to someone through experience or are someone's conscious actions, could be called the humanistic factor." [Znaniecki 1988, 25]. Economics in fact belongs not to the world of nature, but to the world of culture, i.e. manmade creations or artifacts, *ergo* it should account for the humanistic factor, on pain of promoting hypotheses far removed from the empirical knowledge of economic activity.

them characteristic of the culture of the society whose members are involved in that activity[8]. For the success of an economy increasingly based on knowledge, where knowledge gains the importance of a key resource [Drucker 1999], the knowledge on what forms the core of management has to increase – namely economic knowledge, knowledge on the axiological context of management [Gasparski 2003].

The praxiological "double E" is insufficient to explain human activity in society, i.e. in a community of other people. The choices made by people cannot be reduced to formal choices only. What must not be ignored in analyzing any activity is its *axiological context* stemming from the fact that activity is always undertaken by a subject in a community that forms part of a larger whole – society. Meanwhile, the community of which the acting subject is a member, and the society as well, have their particular attitude towards the activities performed by the subjects forming that community and that society, an attitude determined by the dominating values [Bunge 1989; Sztompka 2000] based on which some activities gain social approval while others don't. The dimension of such an evaluation is *ethicality*, which is the "third E."

Ethicality together with the praxiological "double E" forms the triad of the "triple E", i.e. the dimensions according to which all activity is judged. The entirety of the judgment of an activity according to the triad of the "triple E" forms the axiological context of that activity. This applies to choices made in the exchange processes that are the essence of business activity. Ignoring the axiological context in its three dimensions, as some extreme utilitarianists suggest, would *de facto* mean not distinguishing between different actions in ethical terms. Activities can and should be analyzed from a praxiological point of view. However, activities cannot be designed nor any synthesis performed without taking into account all of the dimensions which determine the quality of an action [Gasparski 2003b, 19]. This is closely linked to the level of economic efficacy as a goal in a macro-praxiological sense, and to the costs of the process of change (efficiency), because this process has its price. If we have an economic project (e.g. plans for transformation), there arises the issue of the costs of its implementation. Ignoring or underestimating the costs of an economic project, or more precisely a socioeconomic project, can lead to side effects after a time, to "ozone holes" or "greenhouse effects", only socioeconomic ones that cause social tension[9] of varying degrees. These tensions are sometimes resolved not necessarily peacefully.

3.2. Economical physicalism

Many economists have the ambition of matching the physicists and turning economics into an exact science, a kind of social "physics" which – like natural sciences – would be free of

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[8] American author Lon L. Fuller distinguishes two kinds of morality: morality of duty and morality of aspiration. Morality of duty is the morality of the fundamental rules that organize social life. Morality of duty is the foundation essential for building social structures of a higher order. Morality of aspiration applies to those higher-order structures. Aspirations and their corresponding morality are related to striving after perfection, to all that is decent, to the fullness of skills that people are equipped with. Pointing to exchange as the essence of economics on the basis of a praxiological premise is akin to morality of duty, while the principle of marginal usefulness recognized as being key to economic reflection is similar to morality of aspiration. Economists of the latter school, like moralists of aspiration, are unable to identify the ultimate good. They try to hide this lack of knowledge behind the buzzword "usefulness." As Fuller states, the weakness of the economist here is the same as that of a moralist who aspires to show people the road leading to a decent life but is unable to say what is or what should be the ultimate goal of life. Lacking some kind of highest moral or economic good, Fuller continues, we ultimately refer – in both ethics and economics – to the idea of equilibrium. This is not the seemingly easy "middle road", though, but the difficult Aristotelian golden mean, which is dangerous to the indolent and unskillful and requires the same kind of insight as efficient management [Fuller 2004].

[9] I once highlighted this problem in connection with the issue of wealth and poverty as delayed consequences of the lack of plans for social welfare projects which should be in place to supplement the economic plans determining the progress of Poland's economic transformation [Gasparski 2004, 394-395].

value judgments. “The belief in an external world independent of the perceiving subject is the basis of all natural science.” [Einstein 1999, 97]. Stanislaw Butryn [2006, 27], after whom Einstein’s view is quoted, pointed out that the famous physicist linked any kind of belief with his understanding of religion: “If he thought (believed) some view was right but couldn’t prove it, he would say that view was his religion” [Butryn 2006, 26-27]. The above-quoted exegete of Einstein added that to Einstein, the view that an objective reality existed was a thesis which was “completely free” from a logical point of view, impossible to prove scientifically. Butryn added that “today the conviction that such is the nature of that particular view is probably universally accepted” [Butryn 2006, 45]. The word “probably” is to the point here, because even outside physics which concerns the real world, researchers of human behavior such as theoreticians of economics who are sure – or who believe, in Einstein’s meaning of the word – that value-free economics exists in an ontological sense, are in fact believers of this very kind of religion[10]. The recently deceased Milton Friedman was a supporter of such an economic “religion,” a kind of intellectual infrastructure of economics and also management.

Those who polemicized with Friedman included Herbert A. Simon and Peter F. Drucker. At the aforementioned Warsaw conference “Praxiologies and the Philosophy of Economics”, the former said, for example, that: “What is startlingly absent from the empirical literature of classical economics is evidence of optimization based on direct observation of the behavior of economic actors. Milton Friedman (1953), of course, in his elaborated essay[11] on methodology in economics, has sought to make a virtue of his deficiency. He argues that a theory cannot be judged by the realism of its assumptions, but only by its efficacy in making predictions. […] The second flaw in Friedman’s argument is his claim that unrealism in the assumptions of a theory is a good think, or that is even acceptable.” [Simon 1992, 36]. None of the systems of logic known, and none of the schools of the philosophy of science, provided support for Friedman’s principle of unrealism, Simon concludes.

Seeking an answer to the question, “What is social responsibility?”, the other opponent of Friedman pointed out that modern society is a society of organizations, from which stems the social responsibility of organizations, because “[…] who else is there to take care of society, its problems and its ills? These organizations *are* society. It is futile to argue - said Drucker – as does the American economist and Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman […], that a business has only one responsibility: economic performance. Economic performance is the *first* responsibility of a business. A business that does not show a profit at least equal to its costs of capital is socially irresponsible. […] It waists society’s resources. Economic performance is the bases; without it, a business cannot discharge any other responsibilities, cannot be a good employer, a good citizen, a good neighbor. But economic performance is not the *only* responsibility of a business. […] But without responsibility - Drucker continues - power also always degenerates into non-performance. And organizations do have power, though only social power, albeit only social power. […] Organizations have a responsibility to

[10] Contemporary economic methodologist Sheila C. Dow [2002, 132-133] writes about the conduct of those who use the achievements of economic theory in their practical activity – political decision-makers select a theory that suits them and use it as a convention serving to justify their decisions. One of the aspects of a convention is hidden assumptions, which methodology reveals. One such assumption involves thinking in terms of the ideal type, leading to a mistaken belief in accurate conclusions. However, it needs remembering that the ideal doer makes choices in a situation of complete information or known limitations. Meanwhile, the cited author points out, the issue should be considered the other way round, since in fact we act in situations of incomplete information and inaccurate knowledge of the limitations. This raises the important question of the knowledge that enables people to make decisions based on inadequate information. This applies both to economic actors in business life and to economists, the author sums up.

[11] Friedman, M., 1953, Essays in Positive Economics, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

try to find an approach to basic social problems which fits their competence and which, indeed, makes the social problem an opportunity for the organization [Drucker 1999, 86-87].

This is important for reasons pointed out by such thinkers and doers as Ralf Dahrendorf. He highlighted the fact that "we are just entering a period of ideological disputes over the shape of society, and of protests against what I call the excesses of capitalism. This contestation movement could start in the United States […] not against capitalism as such, but for instance against increasing company profits at the cost of reducing jobs. In Europe, too, we can probably expect a return not so much to ideological politics as to politics based on ideas. I think a dispute is growing over our model of capitalism, over how the rich are getting limitlessly richer, how the model entrepreneur is disappearing – someone who not only took care of his interests and his profits, but also showed consideration for the social impact of his activity" [Dahrendorf 2006].

Dahrendorf's words are supported by the former British Chancellor of the Exchequer and current UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, when he writes about the works of Adam Smith, widely recognized as the founding father of modern economics. Brown writes that while many critics have said that Smith's two treatises contradict each other, because *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* speaks in favor of altruism while *The Wealth of Nations* assumes that all people are egotists, he wants to question this interpretation. Adam Smith stated clearly that the principle "everything for oneself and nothing for others" was a disgusting maxim. Brown says that being Smith's compatriot, he had no problem understanding that *The Wealth of Nations* was supported by *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, that the invisible hand of the market relied on the existence of the helping hand [Brown 2006, 26].

The role of significant support for economic activity is played by ethical infrastructure as a kind of helping hand, and its value cannot be overestimated. Material infrastructure, i.e. ethical regulations and any relevant supporting legal regulations introduced with moderation wherever necessary, and also appropriate institutions within organizations and outside them, require a corresponding intellectual infrastructure, namely knowledge – not ideology – also about the axiological context of economic activity, as one of the kinds of knowledge needed by an economy which is increasingly described as *a knowledge-based economy*. If this is to be more than just a slogan or a PR gimmick, we need to recognize that without properly developed both types of infrastructure, the economic activity we call business will not enjoy the trust it needs to function properly, as pointed out not only by specialists from the academic community but also wise businesspeople, for example those linked to the Caux Round Table[12] [Young 2003]. Education in management and economics should therefore provide this knowledge to successive groups of graduate students as well as postgraduate students looking to supplement their earlier knowledge and practical experience.

4. Principles for responsible management education

Let us return to the article by Sarah Murray that prompted me to write the present paper and invoke some of my earlier works. The article in the *Financial Times*, and several others in a similar vein, was published in connection with the growing willingness of the academic community to get together with the business community and join the UN Secretary General's initiative known as the Global Compact for responsible business activity in a globalized

[12] The name comes from the venue – the small mountain village of Caux on the eastern side of Lake Geneva, near Montreux in Switzerland, where the initiative of Frederic Philips, former chairman of Philips Electronic, and Olivier Giscard d'Estaing led in 1986 to a meeting of businesspeople interested in bringing order to business activity around the world. 1994 saw the adoption of a set of principles for business called the Caux Principles. In October 2005, a meeting of the Caux Round Table was held in Warsaw at the Royal Castle; during a meeting on March 26, 2007, the Declaration of Founding of Caux Round Table Poland was adopted, the statutes were passed, the Board was elected, and an agreement on cooperation with CRT Global was signed.

world. It has been clearly stated that there is a need to draw up a set of principles for responsible education[13] for business. The decision to develop such principles was adopted on October 26, 2006 by representatives of academic institutions at a meeting called the "Business as an Agent of World Benefit Forum" held in Cleveland, Ohio. The Forum was organized by the Academy of Management, Weatherhead School of Management Case Western Reserve University, and UN Global Compact. The institutions that have declared their intention of joining this initiative also include the British Academy of Management, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the European Foundation for Management Development, European Academy of Business in Society, Global Responsible Leadership Initiative, Harvard University's Social Enterprise Knowledge Network, The Caux Round Table, AIESEC, and Net Impact.

The Six Principles for Responsible Management Education was passed at the Global Compact Leaders Summit which convened on July 5, 2007 in Geneva (*Appendix 1*). Adopting these principles for practical application at Polish, and other counties, schools educating management specialists (managers) should be obvious, and adjusting curricula and everyday school operations to the principles is a management education challenge worthy of a country that declares its commitment to becoming a knowledge-based society and to practicing responsible business. It is the ISBEE's task to promote that approach throughout the "global village".

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Appendix 1

THE SIX PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION
Adopted at the Global Compact Leaders Summit
held in Geneva on July 5, 2007

As institutions of higher learning involved in the education of current and future managers we are voluntarily committed to engaging in a continuous process of improvement of the following Principles, reporting on progress to all our stakeholders and exchanging effective practices with other academic institutions:

Principle 1. Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Principle 2. Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Principle 3. Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Principle 4. Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Principle 5. Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Principle 6. Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.