PRME Working Group on Gender Equality
Discussion Paper

The Challenge

One of the main challenges for those involved in management education is that, even though there may be a will and commitment to integrate a gender aware/conscious approach, the community lacks both a central repository of information (cases, studies, etc.) and a strong global network to guide and promote these efforts.

This discussion paper details the context that led to the formation of a PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) Working Group on Gender Equality, including its goals, some early tasks, and several areas for discussion that will set the tone for the Working Group and guide the collection of information and ideas. This is not an academic paper addressing how gender and gender inequality are addressed in management education, but a guiding text designed to help launch the discussions around the Working Group on Gender Equality in its nascent phase.

What is the PRME Working Group on Gender Equity

In March 2010, the UN Global Compact and UNIFEM (now part of UN Women)[1] launched the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).[2] The goal of WEPs is to "help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community."[3] In response to this new initiative, in January 2011 the PRME Secretariat hosted a Human Rights Webinar focused on the WEPs. The goal of the webinar was to consider the relevance of WEPs for the academic community and highlight the importance of embedding gender into business school curriculum around the world. During the webinar, participants expressed interest in the development of a PRME Working Group on gender equality (or inequality) in order to integrate the WEPs into the work of PRME. Discussions were held following the webinar, and the PRME Working Group on Gender Equality was launched in October 2011.

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[1] "In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women¡ The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)"

http://www.unwomen.org/about-us/about-un-women/

[2] "The Women's Empowerment Principles, the product of a collaboration between UNIFEM and the UN Global Compact informed by an international multi-stakeholder consultation, are adapted from the Calvert Women's Principles®. The Calvert Women's Principles® were originally developed in partnership with UNIFEM and launched in 2004 as the first global corporate code of conduct focused exclusively on empowering, advancing and investing in women worldwide." http://www.unifem.org/partnerships/womens_empowerment_principles/

[3] Women's Empowerment Principles: *Equality Means Business*. March 2010. A joint initiative of the UNIFEM and UN Global Compact.
http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/Women's_Empowerment_Principles.pdf

The mission of Working Group on Gender Equality is to bring together academics and employers in order to provide support and resources for integrating gender issues and awareness into management education, business school curricula, and related research to facilitate respect and support for the WEPs and PRME.

The Working Group is guided by two faculty co-coordinators and an international steering committee of women and men who have been active in this arena. Current membership consists of more than 30 members from 15 countries. Individuals interested in joining the Working Group should email PRMESecretariat@unprme.org.

Goals of this Working Group

To accomplish its mission, the Working Group on Gender Equality has established the following goals:

1. Develop an interdisciplinary network of academics employers and other stakeholders who have integrated, or who are interested in integrating, gender issues into business school curricula, research and other areas where management education takes place. This network will include faculty in the arts & sciences (e.g., anthropologists, sociologists, business historians) as well as those in business disciplines.

2. Facilitate a global repository of resources for integrating gender into management education and research.

3. Advocate for new research and the dissemination of knowledge on the integration of gender issues into management education.

4. Conduct analysis of the Global Compact companies and link them as appropriate with the PRME community for research and case study creation.

5. Work with other PRME partners and working groups to encourage the integration of gender issues into their activities.

6. Promote awareness and facilitate the integration of gender issues into management education and research, in alignment with the goals of the WEPs.

Given that the Working Group is in its infancy, the first steps will be to establish a web presence on the PRME website, and to convene the initial meeting of the working group, thus beginning the process of sharing knowledge and best practices and establishing the nature and best way to gather and distribute relevant information to other interested colleagues and business schools. One of the specific outcomes of the Working Group will be the creation of a central, easily accessible repository of links and information, e.g., syllabi, case studies, journal articles and ongoing research, on the integration of gender issues into management education. The PRME Secretariat has encouraged the Working Group to use the May 2012 PRME Global Forum as an opportunity to promote the work of the group, share resources and materials identified throughout its first year, and highlight critical gaps that should be addressed going forward.

Why a Working Group on Gender Equality?

Gender inequality is pervasive throughout all societies and is recognized as a major impediment to poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The business sector, ranging from the smallest firms to the largest multinational corporations, can be responsible for causing, perpetuating and/or reducing gender inequality. The actions (or inactions) of business schools will play an important role in the education of future business leaders, policy-makers and decision-makers. Business schools should be leading the way to change in these areas and providing examples and best practices that can be transformative in the business world more generally. The Working Group was created to provide faculty and business schools resources and linkages to facilitate and expedite their leadership in this critical area. It also will provide a platform and focal point for discussion and collaboration among business schools and the business community thus cultivating their interconnected roles as advocates for change and gender equity.

There is increasing discussion about the need for reflection on how future managers and business leaders are educated in today's business schools.[4] These criticisms call into question the traditional management education model, upon which most business schools are based. Female students, in particular, have been found to have difficulty finding relevance and guidance in the MBA curriculum, in a survey of MBA students at the turn of the century in the United States:

> *Nearly one-third of all women M.B.A. grads and 46 percent of African-American women M.B.A.s find the business school culture to be overly aggressive and competitive. More than one-half of women state that they cannot relate to individuals in case studies and nearly 40 percent report that they do not have adequate opportunities to work with women professor.*[5]

Course materials and discussions that have historically focused on the leadership and management of men, impact the education, prejudices and expectations of all business school students – male as well as female. Research in the Australian context, for instance, found that "a masculine bias in management education" disadvantages both female and male learners."[6]

The Working Group is not advocating a replacement of the male bias in MBA programs and other business curriculum and research. Billing and Alvesson (2000) make a strong case against labeling styles of leadership as masculine or feminine instead proposing greater attention on potential complementarity of masculine or "traditional" approaches and feminine or "alternative" approaches. While skeptical of the notion of "feminine leadership" they find some benefit to it as a counterpoint to the ways in which leadership is usually conceptualized:

> *Feminine leadership would then contribute to a de-masculinization of leadership, not necessarily meaning a feminization of it, but loosening up management being culturally connected to men and, in particular, masculine men and given a masculine meaning.*[7]

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[4] Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Gaddis, 2000; Grey, C., 2004; Mintzberg, 2005; Navarro, 2008; Peredo, A.M., & R. Moore, 2008; Pferrer & Fong, 2004, 2002; Schoemaker, 2008

[5] Catalyst 2000; summary of findings: http://www.catalyst.org/publication/86/women-and-the-mba-gateway-to-opportunity

[6] Smith, 1997: p 875.

[7] Billing and Alvesson, 2000: 155

In recent years, issues around gender have begun to be discussed in business schools, concentrating on issues of the (under)representation of female faculty and administrators, the (under)representation of female students in particular disciplines, bias in the curriculum and the chilly climate, among others.[8] Changes in management education can and should facilitate change in business organizations.

Business schools have responded by adopting policies that improve the hiring processes (inspired by affirmative action or equal opportunity approaches), recruiting female students, and by introducing specific courses on issues that address gender, such as diversity management. A problem with the latter is that often diversity courses are the only place where gender issues are explored in any depth, and that such courses themselves are rarely required. Thus, many students can graduate with a business degree without having had to read about, discuss or reflect upon gender inequality in their own and other societies.

While all of these initiatives are critical and important, they remain framed in a paradigm of equal opportunity, and have done little to change how gender and gender inequality are addressed (taught, managed, discussed and tackled) in management education. In a recent study on women in higher education, Ropers-Huilman argues that:

> Gender takes shape in, and is shaped by, teaching, learning, and leadership practices, and in relations between students, faculty, administrators, and communities.[9]

For this reason, in initiatives such as the Working Group, it is important to go beyond the paradigms of õequal opportunityö and diversity management (both at the administrative and curricular levels) to a more thorough integration of gender equality into management education. After all, Principle 3 of PRME encourages signatories to:

> create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.[10]

Given that the Global Compact, which has a mandate to address gender inequality, and the WEPs inform PRME, this task should be done with a view to securing gender equality. What that would look like and how it is to be done is a subject of discussion for the Working Group.

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[8] Bell, Connerley & Cocchiara, 2009; Kelan & Jones, 2010; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Simpson, 2006.

[9] Ropers-Huilman, Becky, 2003: 2.

[10] The Principles for Responsible Management Education. July 2007. http://www.unprme.org/the-6-principles/index.php.

Gender (In)Equality and the Business School Curriculum

Gender inequity has a long history in business schools and in the workplace, and traditions are hard to change. Overall, case materials on women leaders and managers are still rare. Across discipline, the scope and quantity of materials relevant to integrating gender issues into the curriculum varies widely. In some instances even if a professor in, say, finance, wanted to integrate gender into his or her courses, the standard canon may not do so, making it challenging for time-pressured faculty members. Further, faculty may be unaware of how to access the related materials that do exist.

Initially, the Working Group is going to focus its efforts on understanding the current landscape: identifying resources and best practices in business school curricula and research relating to gender equality in management education. In particular, the Working Group intends to develop a repository of (A) Teaching Resources, (B) Research Materials and (C) Organizations, Programs and other Resources related to gender equality in management education. As suggested above, we intend to officially launch the repository at the 3rd Global Forum for Responsible Management Education in Rio de Janeiro on May 28-30, 2012. These components will include the following:

(A) Teaching Resources

Resources available to assist faculty in integrating gender into management education include some search engines and the websites of some professional academic associations. Examples of these follow.

❖ **Search Engines**

Beyond Grey Pinstripes and CasePlace are initiatives of the Aspen Institute Center for Business Education (Aspen CBE). The scope of these two sites extends well beyond gender issues, however, their search tools make it relatively easy to identify relevant materials.

Beyond Grey Pinstripes

> *Beyond Grey Pinstripes is a research survey and alternative ranking of business schools that spotlights innovative full-time MBA programs leading the way in the integration of issues concerning social and environmental stewardship into the curriculum. These schools are preparing students for the reality of tomorrow's markets by equipping them with the social, environmental, ethical and economic perspectives required for business success in a competitive and fast changing world'.[11]*

A recent keyword search for õwomenö turned up 73 documents that mention women. Some of these provide course outlines that address issues from a gender perspective, either in the whole course or in parts of the course. The outlines come from a variety of disciplines. Descriptions are provided for all the courses listed, and syllabi are included for several.

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[11] http://www.beyondgreypinstripes.org

Sample courses include:

- Accounting

  õFinancial Accounting for MBAs,ö 2011. University of Denver. Focuses on preparing and reporting financial information accurately and transparently, and supporting public policy that insures racial/gender and sexual freedom and justice.

- CSR/Business Ethics

  õWomen in Business,ö 2011. University of Pretoria, South Africa. Discusses why women have been slow to advance to top leadership positions and explores creation of a new form of organization that allows all individuals to reach their full potential.

- Economics

  õEmerging Markets and the Multinational Firm,ö 2011. Loyola University, Chicago. A key aspect of the course is the evaluation of societal growth with income and gender equity considerations.

- Finance

  õFinance I,ö 2011. Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University. Includes discussion of recent quotas for women on corporate boards and a general discussion of gender and fiscal leadership.

- Management

  õCulture, Gender and Diversity Management,ö 2011. University of Jyväskylä School of Business and Economics, Finland. Main topics include women in management, men and masculinities, sexuality in organizations and diversity management practices.

  õLeadership and Management in the 21st Century,ö 2011. University of MA, Boston. Explores issues of effective leadership with a focus on gender and ethnicity issues. Employs several case studies of leading female and minority executives.

- Organizational Behavior

  õManaging Diversity,ö2011. Asian Institute of Management. Explores the themes of cross-culture and diversity in business today.

- Quantitative Methods

  õManagerial Statistics,ö 2011. Columbia Business School. Discusses statistical tools used in making managerial decisions, and potential biases regarding racial and gender discrimination.

[CasePlace](#)

CasePlace.org is a library of teaching resources designed for business school faculty—although other faculty, and student and professional users are welcome too! The site is intended primarily to help faculty incorporate environmental, social and ethical topics into their teaching on business and management.[12]

CasePlace provides access to recent business cases, articles from journals and the popular press, and policy and issue reports. Aspen CBE also posts some of the original materials it produces for the site, including, opinion pieces, essays, web conferences and teaching modules. Most of the information on CasePlace is available to all users. Some materials, however, such as teaching modules developed by Aspen CBE or free review copies of case materials, are available only for faculty who have registered on the site.

Gender-related resources make up a small percentage of the total number of cases and materials available on CasePlace. In September 2011, a search for resources which mention women turned up 194 resources (cases, reports, etc.) out a total of 5,816 in the database. However, targeted searches do turn up interesting examples of gender awareness in a variety of different disciplines, and from business schools in several countries. Some examples follow.

- Cases

ōBell Dewar and Hall: A Case of Balanceö, 2004, M. Sutherland & C. Mitchell, Wits Business School, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. A case involving decisions a woman junior partner has to make regarding her career.

ōManaging Diversity at Cityside Financial Services,ö 2006. Robin J. Ely & Ingrid Vargas, Harvard Business Publishing. A case about a bank that implemented a program to match the gender and racial makeup of its staff to that of its customers, with mixed results.

ōGender Issues in the Workplace,ö 2006. J. Mead, L. Manthy & R. Freeman, Darden Business Publishing. Series of vignettes for women and men involving relationships in the workplace, decisions on whether and when to start a family, etc.

ōExecutive Women at Link.Com,ö 2006. Joanne Martin & Debra Meyerson, Stanford University. Eight-part case on the top-ranking women at Link.Com, a very successful multinational computer company.

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[12] http://www.caseplace.org/about.asp

- Policy and Issue Reports

  õA Closer Look at Business Education: MBA Student Attitudes,ö 2005, Nancy McGaw, The Aspen Institute Business and Society Program.

  õA Closer Look at Business Education: Women and MBAs,ö 2006, Rich Leimsider, The Aspen Institute Business and Society Program. (This paper includes a discussion of how business schools are integrating gender-related topics into the curriculum, with examples of notable courses and initiatives.)

- Articles

  õThe New Normal: Legislating a Place at the Top,ö 2010. Faculty at Emoryøs Goizueta Business School and other experts discuss quotas for women on corporate boards. http://knowledge.emroy/article.cfm?articleid=1321

  õHidden Gendered Assumptions in Mainstream Organizational Theory and Research,ö 2000. Joanne Martin, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 9(2)

- Syllabi

  õDiversity and Gender Issues in Management,ö 2006. Paula Alexander Becker, W. Paul Stillman School of Business, Seton Hall University.

  õLaw and Society: Gender Equality,ö 2006. Anita Hill, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University.

❖ **Professional Academic Associations**

As noted above, professional academic associations also may provide faculty with resources to assist them in incorporating gender-related topics into their courses. A thorough review of these websites still needs to be done to determine how valuable they are now, as well as their potential in this regard for the future. Three examples follow.

American Accounting Association (AAA)

AAA has a Gender Issues and Worklife Balance Section whose objective is to facilitate the interaction among AAA members õregarding gender issues and worklife balance as they relate to accounting practice, research and education.ö (http://aaahq.org/GIWB/gis.html). The section seeks to provide members with assistance in preparation of educational materials. It also intends to identify areas of need for research on gender issues, and disseminate such research results.

[Academy of Management](#) (AoM)

The AoM has a division on Gender & Diversity in Organizations (GDO) whose mission is õto generate and disseminate knowledge about gender and diversity within and outside of organizations, to embrace diverse perspectives in organizational research and education, and to support social justice through the inclusion of marginalized voices in research and practice.ö (http://division.aomonline.org/gdo/inside/inside_domain.htm) Gender-related research of GDO members is highlighted on the website. The teaching section of the GDO, which is dedicated to the improvement and support of teaching diversity-related courses and topics, includes tabs for undergraduate and graduate syllabi. At the undergraduate level, examples of posted course syllabi are: õManaging a Diverse Workforce,ö õCultural Diversity in the Workplace,ö and õWomen and Men in Business.ö Graduate course syllabi include, õIntercultural Management: Multicultural Organizations in a Global World,ö õDiversity and Conflict in Organizations,ö and õGlobalization and Diversity.ö AoM members are encouraged to email the website manager syllabi for other courses and updated materials.

As of September 2011, the most recent syllabus posting at the undergraduate level was in 2003, while that at the graduate level was in 2007. Thus, this website would benefit from some more recent examples. Yet, the framework and tools are available and it should be relatively easy to expand and update these resources.

[American Economic Association](#) (AEA)

The [Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession](#) (CSWEP) within the American Economic Association (AEA) includes a section on [Research and Resources](#). This section includes data sources, such as õ[Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being](#)ö published by the U.S. Department of Commerce.[13] It also identifies a variety of articles that address, for example, women in the economics profession, and gender differences among economics students.

(B) Research Materials

The Working Group will similarly work on making the results of research on gender-related issues in management education available through the repository links and affiliated professional associations. This will not only help disseminate research findings to faculty and deans, it will help flag research gaps that PhD candidates and business school faculty may wish to address.

A key issue the Working Group has yet to resolve pertains to the scope of the research materials to be included in the repository.

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[13] õ[Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being](#)ö published by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

(C) Organizations, Programs & Other Resources

The third component of the repository will be information on, and linkages to, other key resources that will facilitate the integration of gender issues and awareness into management education. Listed here are just two of many such valuable resources available.

The Aspen Institute Center for Business Education (Aspen CBE). An organization dedicated to providing business leaders õwith the vision and knowledge to integrate corporate profitability and social value.ö In addition to ranking MBA programs based on how they incorporate social, environmental and ethical issues into their offerings, the Aspen CBE offers a wealth of materials and links for faculty to assist them in incorporating these topics into their teaching, research and extracurricular activities. [http://www.aspencbe.org]

The Gender Equality Project (GEP). A Swiss Foundation committee to õcreating a world where women and men are equally valued and respected in all aspects of economic, political and social life. õ In partnership with the World Economic Forum the GEP has launched a global certification in gender equality that recognizes global corporations that have successfully implemented policies and practices that achieve gender equality. [http://www.genderequalityproject.org]

The Gender Equality Repository as a Tool and First Step in the Process

There is much more that can and should be done to help faculty integrate gender issues into their courses. Professional academic associations and various search engines can be the focal points for valuable guidance and resources for faculty members seeking to incorporate gender issues and discussion into their courses. There are, no doubt, faculty who already have excellent examples of how to integrate various aspects of gender into their courses, but who have not posted their materials on websites or other databases. With the development of well-known and easily accessible sites for these materials, business school deans can assist in identifying these individuals and encouraging them to share their course syllabi and other curriculum materials.

Development of the global repository of teaching and other resources is a first step in promoting and expediting the integration of gender issues in management education. The Working Group also can work with professional academic associations to expand the breadth and depth of materials they make available to their members on their websites. Moreover, the repository should allow the Working Group and others to pinpoint by discipline where the major gaps exist in gender-related curriculum materials and best practices. The Working Group can work with business school deans and faculty to encourage individuals to step up to the plate to fill these gaps, possibly with funding from their institutions, or from foundations seeking to promote gender equality. Further, the Working Group can conduct analyses of the Global Compact companies and link them as appropriate with the PRME community for research and case study creation.

Discussion Questions

Finally, a few questions are offered to encourage debate and discussion on how best to integrate gender issues into management education.

- How can the Working Group address the õhidden curriculum,ö which has been defined as ₌the implicit dimensions of educational experienceø[14] Blasco examines this concept with particular reference to the PRME

- Is the concept of gender mainstreaming a useful one for the purposes of the Working Group? The UNDP and the ILO, both UN partners of the GC, describe gender mainstreaming as follows:

    Mainstreaming is not about adding a "woman's component" or even a "gender equality component" into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means... bringing the experience, knowledge, and interest of women and men to bear on the development agenda. It may require changes in goals, strategies and actions so that both women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. Thus, the goal of mainstreaming gender equality is the transformation of unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both women and men.[15]

    The UN commitment to gender mainstreaming was reaffirmed in 2005 by the UN General Assembly.

- Does the õgender blindnessö that is observed in management education come from ₌õnot seeing,ø õbeing unaware,ö õsuppressing genderö or õgender defensivenessöø[16] If so, how can it be addressed?

- How important is it to include a feminist lens on management education?

- What male biases continue to exist in the MBA and in other business school programs? How can we best integrate materials on women leaders and managers into the curriculum? How do these patterns affect gender issues more broadly in the overall culture of business schools? How are working cultures and country cultures interwoven?

- How can we get business school deans and other administrators to be active and effective leaders in promoting gender awareness and the integration of gender issues into management education?

- How do issues of, and challenges regarding, gender in management education differ across the globe? How can we leverage the experiences and lessons learned across countries?

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[14] Blasco, 2011: 1.
[15] UN General Assembly, 2005.
[16] Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004: 877.

Next Steps

This discussion paper has identified some key issues and potential areas of discussion and exploration for the PRME Working Group on Gender Equality. The text is offered in the hope that it stimulates members to participate in the Working Group, by contributing ideas and suggested resources and best practices. The next step is a Webinar, where the proposed goals and activities of the Working Group will be discussed, and where Webinar participants will be able to share their knowledge and expertise, as well as volunteer to help create the repository of resources on gender equality in management education.

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