

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Abstract

“We are committed to creating economic value, but we are not indifferent to how we do it. ... Progressive businesses are gaining competitive advantage by responding to societal signals. ... We prosper by helping society to prosper.” Idar Kreutzer, CEO Storebrand, 2005 (IISD, 2007)

The issue of social responsibility is now increasingly spoken in corporate practice but also in the theoretical view. In Slovakia, there are a small part of educational institutions which follow the principles of social responsibility. The aim of the theoretical study is to point out the importance of the social responsibility of educational institutions. Social responsibility must not only be part of educational institution internal documents in the form of long-term plans but should also be part of its real life.

Key words: educational institution, social responsibility, stakeholder.

Classification JEL: M14 – Social Responsibility.

1. Introduction

The issue of social responsibility is discussed by many authors from many points of view (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1979; Bussard, Marček, Markuš, Bunčák & Mazurkiewicz, 2004; IISD, 2007; Buciová, 2008; Dahlsrud, 2008; Mutz, 2008; ISO, 2010; Kuldová, 2010; Lakin & Scheubel, 2010; Remišová, 2011; Lorinczy, Sroka, Jankal, Hittmar, Szanto, 2015).

The first definitions of socially responsible business came from the 1950s. One of the first definitions was created by Howard R. Bowen, who in his book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* stated (Bowen, 1953): “*Social responsibility is a commitment of entrepreneurs to seek strategies to make such decisions or carry out such activities, which are desirable in terms of goals and values of our society*”.

Lord Holme and Richard Watts in their publication *Making Good Business Sense* listed (Holme & Watts, 2000): “*Corporate social responsibility is the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life*”.

The authors who define social responsibility, primarily coincide in the fact that they should be part of all businesses. In the last millennium, other voluntary organizations began to characterize social responsibility. Some definitions are shown in Table 1.

Each of the definitions of CSR is characterized by its (Bussard, Marček, Markuš, Bunčák & Mazurkiewicz, 2004; Kašparová & Kunz, 2013):

- Versatility, which means that it is not intended for just one type of business, but it can also be other forms of social responsibility;
- Volunteering, which means that the management of the institution should decide on the extent to which the organization behaves in a socially responsible manner;
- Active cooperation with stakeholders, which are a key part of social responsibility;
- Commitments to contribute to the development of quality of life;
- Focusing on sustainable development and not just on rapid growth.

Corporate social responsibility focuses on three key areas, namely economic, social and environmental. ISO 26000 also identifies these areas as three pillars of social responsibility. In the economic sphere, institutions should focus on improving processes for economic development and minimizing economic impacts. The social area should be aimed at minimizing negative impacts on the social system, on the area of health and safety of employees, the fight

against corruption and also the quality of life. The environmental pillar aims to minimize the impact of the institution on the environment. These include, for example, recycling, alternative energy use, and the like (Bussard, Marček, Markuš, Bunčák & Mazurkiewicz, 2004).

Table 1. Definition of (corporate) social responsibility

Author of the definition	Definition
World Business Council for Sustainable Development	Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.
Business in the Community	Corporate social responsibility is a positive influence that companies make to the society and the environment through its operations, products or services, or through interaction with key stakeholders such as employees, customers, investors, communities and suppliers.
The European Commission (2001)	A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.
The European Commission (2011)	The responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society. Respect for applicable legislation, and for collective agreements between social partners, is a prerequisite for meeting that responsibility. To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders, with the aim of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising the creation of shared value for their owners/shareholders and for their other stakeholders and society at large; • Identifying, preventing and mitigating their possible adverse impacts.
ISO 26 000	Responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to sustainable development, including health and the welfare of society; • Takes into account the expectations of stakeholders; • Is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour; • Is integrated throughout the organization and practised in its relationships.
Government of Canada	Corporate social responsibility is understood to be the way companies integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, decision making, strategy and operations in a transparent and accountable manner and thereby establish better practices within the company, create wealth and improve society.

(source: WBCSD. 2000. *Corporate Social Responsibility: Making Good Business Sense*. (Online); Government of Canada. 2006. *Corporate Social Responsibility: An Implementation Guide for Canadian Business*. Ottawa. Industry Canada; European Commission. 2001. *A Renewed EU Strategy 2011–14 for Corporate Social Responsibility*; European Commission. 2011. *Corporate Social Responsibility Green Paper, Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility*; Bussard, A., Marček, E., Markuš, M., Bunčák, M. & Mazurkiewicz, P. 2004. *Spoločensky zodpovedné podnikanie*. Bratislava: Nadácia Integra)

The ISO 26000 standard is not business-only, but is generally written for any type of institutions. This fact represents the possibility of implementation of this standard also in public administration institutions (regional, district offices, etc.), in healthcare facilities, in educational institutions, which should also behave in a socially responsible manner.

An indispensable part of social responsibility are stakeholders, who are directly or indirectly come into contact with the selected institution. They mainly concern owners, shareholders and investors, employees, consumers, business partners, competitors, government, communities and the media. Each type of institution may have different stakeholders. Each of these stakeholders has an impact on the business or the functioning of the selected institution.

If the institution begins to behave in a socially responsible way, it gains a number of advantages such as (Kašparová & Kunz, 2013):

- Becoming a sought-after employer;
- Increasing the reputation and positive image of the company;
- Growing sales and loyalty of customers;
- Increasing operating efficiency and reducing operating costs;
- Reducing the costs of risk management;
- Improving stakeholder relations and long-term sustainability.

The aim of this theoretical study is to point out the importance of the social responsibility of educational institutions.

2. Theoretical background of social responsibility of the educational institution

Social responsibility began to gradually penetrate into other spheres. The primary role of educational institutions is to prepare students to pursue their future vocation by teaching. In addition to teaching, universities focus on scientific and research activities.

The economic, political and social changes that took place over the last decades have had an impact also on the educational institutions, which have undergone an ample reform process meant to meet the new challenges they are facing. Globalisation, the knowledge society, innovation, the development of technologies, a growing emphasis on the market forces are among the key-factors which influence the educational institutions' mission, organisation and profile, the mode of operation and delivery of education (Vasilescu *et al.*, 2010).

The development of technology requires a rapid response of schools to the creation of new study fields that will be in line with the needs of the labor market. The understanding of corporate social responsibility and social responsibility of an educational institution is different in the definition of 'customer'. In the business environment, the customer is the person who decides to purchase the selected product or service of the business, which ultimately brings profit. In understanding the social responsibility of educational institutions, the customer is, for example, a person who has chosen to study in the selected institution and will be provided with a "service" of education, which is covered in different ways depending on the type of institution and the country's legislative conditions.

The university social responsibility can be defined as: "*a policy of ethical quality of the performance of the university community (students, faculty and administrative employees) via the responsible management of the educational, cognitive, labour and environmental impacts produced by the university, in an interactive dialogue with society to promote a sustainable human development*" (Reiser, 2007).

University social responsibility (USR), is a philosophy or principle for social movement, which can be perceived as a philosophy of a university to use an ethical approach to develop and engage with the local and global community in order to sustain the social, ecological,

environmental, technical, and economic development. USR acts as a key player for social changes, as USR implies having a policy of ethical quality, governing the performance of the university community. This is done via the responsible management of the educational cognitive, labour, and environmental impact from the university, in an interactive dialogue with society and its communities, in order to promote sustainable human development through education (transforming knowledge), provision of service, research, teaching, and scholarship (Chen, Nasongkhla & Donaldson, 2015).

Vallaey (2015) identified the key features of *social responsibility, which can be also applied in educational institution*:

- It is a responsibility of organisations for the *impacts* they cause. The negative impacts (social and environmental) of their activities should (ideally) progressively disappear. This is the pledge they are called on to make.
- This responsibility requires a form of management that seeks to *make society sustainable* by eliminating unsustainable negative impacts and promoting sustainable forms of development.
- Social responsibility *is not beyond and outside the law*; it works in coordination with legal obligations. Laws should stipulate the negative impacts that are prohibited and drive socially responsible behaviour on the part of all actors. Social responsibility does not start “beyond the law”, as one often hears; it is rooted in the law and plays a role in ensuring that laws are complied with and improve over time.
- Social responsibility requires coordination between the stakeholders who are able to act on the negative impacts diagnosed. They must work together on the basis of *co-responsibility* to find mutually beneficial solutions (to build value for all social actors and develop win-win solutions, rather than creating value for some at the expense of others).

3. Social responsibility of the educational institution in Slovak Republic

The realization of the social responsibility of universities or general educational institutions is voluntary in Slovakia. Some of the colleges have the social responsibility contained in the long-term plan of the college, which contains the individual activities that would be the responsibility of this responsibility. These include, for example, strengthening cooperation with regional partners, promoting marketing activities, popularizing the institution, organizing various actions aimed at current and potential students, adherence to the Code of Ethics, but also social responsibility for the state of the environment. However, it remains a question of whether the goals set in the field of CSR are fulfilled, as well as whether there is an internal standard regulating the social responsibility of the educational institution.

In the Long-Term Plan of the University of Žilina, this area is devoted to a separate section – *6.5 University Social Responsibility*, where the objectives, activities and indicators for this area are defined (UNIZA, 2014).

Similarly, the Long-term Plan for the Development of the University of Economics in Bratislava for the period 2015–2019 with a view to 2023 includes as a first principle the activities of the university: *acceptance of social responsibility in relation to the SR and abroad in the implementation of basic activities* (education, research and transfer of knowledge). The focus on social responsibility is also part of the university’s vision: *... perceived and recognized as a modern and dynamic university comparable to major and universally respected higher educational institutions of a similar degree, at least in the Central European region, with a high level of professional and scientific research, reflecting social responsibility, reflected in specific projects of cooperation with institutions and organizations in Slovakia and abroad* (EUBA, 2015).

In the field of secondary education, there should be standards of social responsibility, but this term is not present in the long-term development of secondary education for individual regions in Slovakia (*BSK, 2017; BBSK, 2016; KSK, 2014; NSK, 2015; PSK, 2015; TTSK, 2008; TSK, 2016; ŽSK, 2014*). This term is already contained in the document Teaching Slovakia – The National Program for Development of Education and Training, which forms the basis for the formulation of national education development program and education (*Minedu, 2017*).

From the point of view of activities carried out in Slovakia in the framework of education it is possible to identify that it is a socially responsible activity of secondary schools, often in cooperation with The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. This is a number of activities carried out in the form of environmental competitions such as paper collection, waste collection in the selected territory, etc. for which schools receive the designation 'green school' (*CEEV Živica, 2017*). In the social field, schools often cooperate with businesses where they can obtain material and technical equipment for the lessons in various competitions. Companies, in cooperation with the Government of the Slovak Republic, regularly review interest in study programs and also create new study programs that are in line with the needs of the labor market. In this area, it is also possible to mention a system of dual education that efficiently connects individual stakeholders and prepares students into practice for particular businesses (*Dualnysystem, 2017*).

Since 2013, The Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava announces a competition in social responsibility with the aim to inform, motivate, support and appreciate the unique activities of educational institutions by means of which the institutions spread the idea of social responsibility. The winner will be awarded the *Granátt award*. The name of the contest is derived from grenade stone which has been attributed the ability to produce energy and restore power. The ambition of the competition is to present projects focused on the implementation of modern methods of social responsibility in educational institutions, their development, trends and importance for the society. A professional jury assesses the innovative aspect of the project, its contribution, communication, economy, continuity and the level of work-out. Educational institutions which did projects focused on any of the social responsibility areas (*economic, social and environmental*) in the preceding year may apply for the award. This was the first idea of raising awareness of the social responsibility of educational institutions (*FMK, 2017*).

4. Conclusion

Stakeholders are a key factor in managing social responsibility. For the educational institution, it is mainly about students who study, plan to study or have completed their studies at a given institution. In addition, they are employees who undertake the teaching and, where appropriate, research or are part of the administrative activities of the educational institution. Businesses are another key stakeholder with which the education institution should be constantly in contact with the creation of curricula and study programs in line with the needs of the labor market.

In the Table 2 we attempt to create a list of the examples of stakeholders' requirements when considering the social responsibility and its potential improvement.

Recommendations on the social responsibility of educational institutions can be summarized in the following points:

- Social responsibility must not only be part of its internal documents in the form of long-term plans but should also be part of its real life.
- The education institution must be an ethical example of social responsibility for its entire environment (care for stakeholders, ecological footprint ...).
- In the field of student education, they must focus on their positive direction towards the principles of social responsibility – teaching of social responsibility subjects, their active

involvement in the activities carried out in this field and thus building a strong link to social responsibility.

- Educational programs must be designed and implemented in accordance with the needs of practice.
- Projects implemented by an educational institution should also be socially beneficial and contribute to sustainability.

Table 2. Examples of stakeholders' requirements (own study)

Stakeholder	Requirement
Potential students	Good access to study information
Students	Teaching and learning environment on high quality level
Graduates	Cooperation's options; Ease of finding a job
Employees	Quality of working conditions
Enterprises	Graduates with sufficient knowledge and experiences
State	Zero unemployment of graduates

Of course, when the university want to be considered as 'socially responsible', it is needed to connect all the people at the whole university and commonly build the great educational institution which will be a valuable element/partner in creating the wise economy.

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