

A STRATEGIC APPROACH OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INSTITUTIONS FROM PUBLIC ORDER AREA

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ABSTRACT

Following the economic and social context changes in which public institutions operate, it has increased expectations about their responsible behavior on the public funds expended for their activity. Constant expectations appear in the area of human resources and overall impact of the institution's activity on society and the environment. Social responsibility is becoming increasingly important as a strategic organizational approach, and not just a peripheral activity linked exclusively to the organization's reputation and image. In order to be effective, social responsibility programs and activities of a public institution need to be integrated in the institution's strategic plan. In this regard we have proposed, based on exploratory research undertaken on literature and empirical research conducted on the institutions from the public order area, the implementation of a strategic grids in order to ensuring efficiency of the core activities and full and coherent integration of social responsibility programs in core strategy of public institution. This model is adapted to be applied on the institutions from the public order area.

KEYWORDS: *social responsibility, strategic approach, public sector, institutions from the public order area*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *M14.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Strengthening social responsibility has become an integral part of public policies for private sector development. Social responsibility is considered a deliberate choice of companies to achieve the three dimensions of sustainable growth and development (people, profit and environment) and to maintain relations with various stakeholders on transparency and dialogue coordinates (IOB Study, 2013). The recent economic crisis has led private sector organizations to improve their activities in order to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. As for private sector organizations this need is determined by maintaining or increasing competitiveness, public sector organizations need is driven by the increasing demand from the public to increase the degree of responsibility.

Moon (2002) identified three categories of microeconomic vectors which facilitated the development of social responsibility: the company specific vectors; the collective interests of the business sector and the collective interest of society, as well as three types of vectors that have acted in the public sector that have supported the development of social responsibility: social responsibility actions may be substitute for actions of public authorities or institutions; actions of social responsibility can complement actions of the public authorities or institutions; the actions of social responsibility can legitimize government policies.

Moon (2004) believes that at the macro level there are three categories of vectors of social responsibility: business sector, public sector and social vectors society. The business sector is under stakeholder's pressure acting on the companies (public authorities, investors, suppliers, partners, customers, employees, local communities, etc). Companies want through responsible behavior and

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reputation to improve relations with employees and other stakeholders. Social vectors may include a number of requirements from consumers, communities and employees. Typically, the public sector establishes its priorities and policies consistent with the social vectors. To be successful, public initiatives requires a positive response from the business.

In the last decade, the public sector has joined other stakeholders in taking a more active role in promoting social responsibility vector (Moon 2004), in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, recognizing that public policies are crucial to encourage responsible behavior from private sector (Fox et al., 2002).

Given the new public management paradigm, public organizations must operate in compliance with the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and social responsibility. The new public management paradigm began to be implemented in the public sector due to the perception that the public sector reforms "are inefficient compared with cyclic restructuring occurring within the private sector" (Ball and Grubnic 2007, p. 248). Although social responsibility is primarily regarded as the attribute of private initiatives, having a voluntary nature, it can not be separated from the public sector. Typically, social accountability in the public sector reflects the areas of intervention where the state has assumed a central role, since they are less likely to be the subject of private and voluntary interventions. In the public sector, although there is a high degree of social responsibility that is due to the pressure of civil society, there are not clear rules, guidelines that ensure a harmonization of actions and reporting methodology (Clements and Bowrey, 2010).

Steurer (2010) considers that public policy in field of social responsibility can operate in the following four thematic areas:

- increasing awareness and building the necessary capacities to facilitate implementation of the actions of social responsibility;
- improving the transparency and reporting so that companies provide reliable information on the economic, social and environmental performance;
- facilitating socially responsible investment criteria taking into account ethical, social and environmental criteria alongside economical in adoption of investment decisions.
- adopting a responsible behavior by organizations and institutions to give examples of best practices in public procurement, environmental policies and social policies.

The paper explores how to address social responsibility from the point of view of organizations and institutions from the public order area, both in terms of public policies on social responsibility, as well as in terms of implementation of responsible behavior in organizations and institutions. Research methodology involved the conducting of a theoretical exploratory research on public sector roles within the area of social responsibility and an empirical research that led us to the proposal of integration strategic model of social responsibility in the basic strategy of the institution.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR ROLES IN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AREA

Initially, in the early 21st century, the debate on the role of governments focused on the need to adopt legislation to regulate social responsibility activities. As it was found that the social responsibility of private companies can address a range of social and environmental issues that can not be solved by legislation, it was concluded that social responsibility should be subject to a soft intervention or soft regulation process (Joseph, 2003). Most researchers who have studied the area have concluded that public policies concerning social responsibility should use soft forms of intervention in order to model the voluntary behavior of companies (European Commission, 2002; Fox et al. 2002; Bell, 2002; Zapp, 2003; Lepoutre et al. 2004; Albareda et al. 2008).

One of the most frequently cited classifications was enounced by Fox et al. (2002). Fox et al. (2002) believe that within social responsibility area the public sector fulfills four functions: mandating, facilitator, partner, endorse.

In the role of mandatory, public sector organization shall exercise the powers conferred upon it by legislation, given the objectives of social responsibility considered a priority. In their role as facilitator, public sector organizations stimulate private companies and citizens to address issues of social and environmental responsibility, fulfilling a function of catalyst. For example, an institution from the public order area can carry out education and prevention programs that target private companies and citizens. Public sector organizations can boost the involvement of key stakeholders in various initiatives (eg prevention campaigns, dissemination, training or awareness of citizens or private companies). Also, procurement public policy can stimulate responsible behavior of private companies representing suppliers.

The concept of public-private partnership can play a central role in implementing programs and actions in area of social and environmental responsibility. Public-private partnerships can provide complementary skills to public sector organizations resulting from cooperation with the private sector and civil society organizations in addressing social and environmental issues. In a partnership, public sector organizations may have the function of initiator, partner, actor that support action or program through technical assistance.

In the role of endorser, public sector organizations can give political assistance through the development of legislation to support the private companies and citizens who wish to behave responsibly (for example, incentives for fleet renewal when buying eco-friendly cars). Public sector organizations can act in the role of endorser also through institutional transparency in particular as regards the manner of the procurement and practices in this area. They also may be awarded diplomas, certificates, etc. to businesses and citizens in recognition of its efforts increasing sense of social and environmental responsibility.

There is a clear distinction between these four roles. For example, there may be cases where the public organization act as mandatory and partner or as a partner and facilitator. The challenge for public sector organizations is finding those priorities that are relevant in the regional and national context, supporting and enhancing initiatives generated by the private sector.

3. STRATEGIC INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN BASE STRATEGY OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION

Social responsibility is becoming increasingly important as a strategic organizational approach, and not just a peripheral activity linked exclusively to the organization's reputation and image (Burlea Schiopoiu et al., 2009). In order to be effective, social responsibility programs and activities of a public institution need to be integrated in the institution's strategic plan. In this respect, we proposed implementation of a strategic grid in order to ensure efficiency of the core activities and full and coherent integration of social responsibility programs in core strategy of public institution. To achieve this we believe it is necessary to develop a model of creation and implementation of social responsibility strategies, model intended to provide a strategic approach to the concept of social responsibility. The steps of this model, which will be important prerequisites regarding our future research are illustrated in Figure 1.

The proposed model is a model designed to ensure a strategic approach to social responsibility programs and actions (linking social objectives and activities with the core objectives and activities), but also to increase the chances of success of the responsible behavior implementation in organizational culture.

Each organization has a mission that justifies its existence. The organization must decide which the mission is and be very careful not to lose it sight (or any other organization members and stakeholders), confusing with various purposes or with various activities they carry or services they offer. Thus, the formulation of the mission is a considerable opportunity for specialists in the organization's strategy to obtain the necessary support of all stakeholders. In defining the organization's mission we must consider three dimensions. The first dimension concerns stakeholders whose needs and requirements need to be met by implementing the mission. The

second is made up of stakeholder needs and requirements to be met. The third dimension regard methodology, namely how the organization will act to meet these needs and requirements.

The second stage of the model involves establishing priority areas in social responsibility. The five strategic areas that make the institutions from the public order area to behave responsibly if they are managed efficiently are: human resources, services, community involvement, environmental impact, organizational governance.

The next step is to develop a social responsibility strategy that reflects current organization objectives and expectations of the community, employees, partners and other stakeholders. This strategy should be integrated into the core organizational strategies so as to allow efficient management of the social, economic and environmental impacts. The existence of such a strategy and its implementation in practice lead to increased public confidence, prevention and reduction in antisocial acts, increased safety and security, improved service quality.

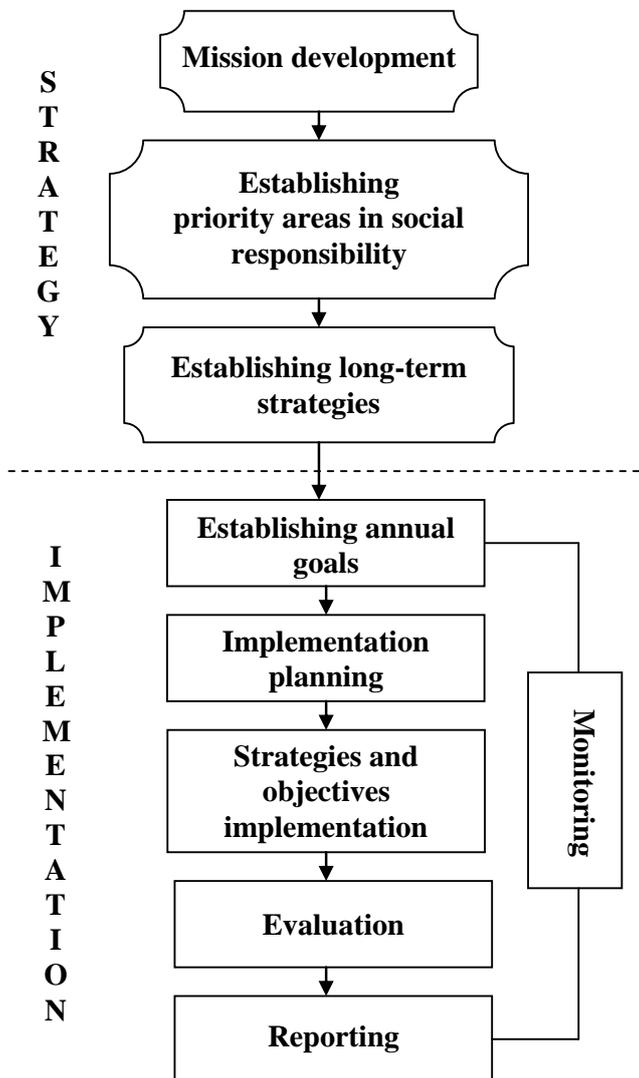


Figure 1. The process of developing and implementing strategies of social responsibility

Implementation of the strategy is done through a set of objectives. The objective is a future state of the organization expressed in quantifiable terms. In chronological terms, the mission of an organization refers more to past and present of an organization than its future. Strategies and objectives characterize the future of any organization. They are desirable future state for the organization, which the organization's management expresses to describe desired future. Each organizational entity must, therefore, establish a set of goals and strategies for the organization.

In Table 1, we present the strategies and objectives of social responsibility that we believe a public institution should adopt, based on theoretical and empirical research efforts on social responsibility and organizational culture within a public institution.

Table 1. Strategies and objectives for social responsibility area

Strategies	Objectives
Developing an effective human resources	Recruitment and promotion using the criterion of value, integrity, honesty and respect for diversity
	Ensuring good working conditions and labor relations
	Developing an organizational culture based on respect, fairness, transparency, equal opportunities
	Promoting a culture of performance
Improving delivered services	Improving the safety of citizens by adapting services to their needs
	Treating citizens with dignity and respect
	Consultation with citizens about ways to improve services
Stronger involvement in the community	Getting the trust of citizens treating equally all groups of the community
	Involvement in partnerships that promote responsible actions in terms of social and environmental issues
	Supporting the local economy through responsible purchasing policy
	Support to vulnerable groups
Minimizing negative environmental impact	Adopting a model of effective and sustainable consumption of energy by using renewable resources
	Waste reduction
	Supporting biodiversity and environmental quality by preventing crime and offenses related to environmental pollution and through voluntary actions
Improving organizational governance	Applying modern standards and practices in terms of accountability, control, transparency and reporting to increase the quality of management
	Increasing transparency regarding the fulfillment of tasks and public spending
	Influencing all stakeholders to adopt a responsible behavior
	Implementing a management system to support sustainable development

In order to ensure social responsibility strategies implementation and integration in core strategies of a public institutions, in our opinion it is necessary that the institutions to establish a timetable for reporting (quarterly, semi-annual or annual reports). Implementation of social responsibility strategies can be done by a group, a team designated by management of the organization or by all members of the organization based on the established mechanisms and procedures for

implementing.

For any member of the organization to know what to do it is necessary to provide a plan at the beginning of each year indicating programs and actions to be carried out, responsible persons and budgets. In this way strategy and objectives are known by everyone in the organization which ensures the success of social responsibility programs and actions.

At the stage of implementation strategies and objectives, public institution operates programs and measures that it had planned. Throughout the implementation of these social responsibility programs and actions developed within the local community institution must monitor them to make an assessment of the results and present a report at the end of the period of the objectives' fulfillment.

4. CONCLUSION

To fulfill their mission, in the future, the institutions from the public order area should, in addition to strategies and classical methods, catalyze and or be co-participant in a number of social responsibility initiatives. Through these initiatives the public institutions are more implicated in community issues, involving reversely citizens in actions that they carry out. In this way, final scope, serving the interests and needs of citizens, is satisfied with maximum results. The values that should underpin both the core activity of the institutions from the public order area and the social responsibility programs and actions should be: professionalism, responsibility, integrity, dedication, excellence.

In order to be effective social responsibility programs and activities should be integrated in the institution's strategic plan. Thus, in this paper, we proposed implementing a strategic grid enabling to ensure efficiency of the core activities and full and coherent integration of social responsibility programs in core strategy of public institution. The need to develop such a methodology for creating and implementing of social responsibility strategies is justified through the idea of providing a greater authenticity and transparency in relation to various categories of stakeholders. To identify the status in which public institution is placed in process of implementing an effective social responsibility strategy, it is required identification of perceptions of key stakeholders involved in the social responsibility programs and actions. In this regard, we intend in future research, to obtain and interpret perceptions and challenges faced by various stakeholders of institutions from the public order area regarding social responsibility. For social responsibility, the relationship between non-governmental sector, private sector and public sector is fundamental, and therefore the role of public institutions in relation to other stakeholders must be clarified in further research.

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