



**Conclusions of the 8th IRDO international conference:  
Social responsibility and current challenges 2013:  
Education and communication for more social responsibility**

**162 participants of 8<sup>th</sup> IRDO international conference, which was held from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013 in Maribor, Slovenia, passed several conclusions with a shared message: "There should be more education about social responsibility, it should be communicated in the right way, and Intuition is to be included in the business decisions."**

For the eighth consecutive year, Institute for Development of Social Responsibility – IRDO, this year in cooperation with University of Maribor and eleven other partners, organized the conference, which was held at the Rector's premises of University of Maribor, from 7 to 9 March 2013 in Maribor, entitled "Social responsibility and current challenges 2013: Education and Communication for more social responsibility«.

The conference was organized by IRDO and University of Maribor, in collaboration with International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences, Vienna, European Academy of Sciences and Arts, Salzburg, CSR Europe, Enterprise 2020, Faculty of Arts - Department of Sociology, University of Maribor, Slovenian Research Agency, Municipality of Maribor, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Styria, Association Manager, Slovenian public relations association, Marketing Association of Slovenia, Slovenian-German Chamber of Commerce, sponsors, and media partners. Honorary patron of the conference is Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia. More than 90 authors from 15 countries (Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Macedonia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and USA) participated with more than 70 contributions. Conference was attended by scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs, cultural workers, experts, students and many others.

After the lectures and discussions in several sections the speakers and participants of the conference passed the following conclusions:

- 1. Lack of social responsibility, i.e. responsibility for human impacts on society, is the common denominator of all problems of the modern society and earlier societies.**
  - The European Union and the UN reasonably see corporate social responsibility as an essential basis for a way out from the current global and local socio-economic crisis, because it emphasizes the interdependence and holism of human behavior. Unfortunately, this has not been enough recognized; this is why education and communication on social responsibility are essential.
  - Examples of care for the street children, and other examples of suffering people suggest that they should be provided with knowledge of the innovation, which also relates to sustainability. Among other things, the need to overcome human envy is critical.



- What one does not know, one cannot do; this makes education and communication for social responsibility necessary.
- It is understandable that social responsibility in Slovenia hasn't been established soon enough. In the previous system, other organizations took care of people's social responsibility. Now, this exists no longer and people must ensure their own social responsibility. Everyone has to start with himself/herself and all together, we need to be socially responsible. For the last 20 years we have lived in a feeling that we are socially responsible, but we were not.
- The current crisis and uprisings of people generate the message that citizens are more and more aware of their own power and at the same time responsibility. Abuse is not allowed anymore. People are willing to construct a better, more socially responsible society.

## **2. Young people should be more educated on (corporate) social responsibility.**

- Young people should be better educated on corporate social responsibility. Important elements of a healthy environment in primary schools are knowledge, social climate (as an invisible soul of the school), order and responsibility to one-self and to everyone around.
- It has to be insured that elements of social responsibility remain a part of research projects in primary and high schools and that these elements are additionally integrated in research projects of pupils of all Slovenian primary and high schools (an initiative of the conference should be sent to Association for Technical Culture of Slovenia).
- All needed changes in society and personal arrangement of individuals can be achieved more easily with the help of (the classic) music.
- The employment of young people depends too much on the individual. Greater emphasis should be given to the actual job creation capacity of young people on the society level.
- Contact and communication with young Slovenes abroad have to be established and help also preserve the Slovenian culture and social responsibility.
- The Slovenian society believes that young people are more and more politically apathetic. They channel their energy into other, rather than political sphere. Anyway, their individual social responsibility has increased. They care for nature, use bicycles, eat vegetarian in order not to harm animals, are involved in intergenerational cooperation, when choosing employment, they prefer jobs where they can help others. Regarding social responsibility youngsters give their message: "You can count on us."

## **3. We need socially responsible and sustainable universities.**

- After several years of education on sustainable economy, etc., University of Maribor, Slovenia, has recently adopted a program for "socially responsible and sustainable university". A good practical example is shown in its program "Slovenia as a learning region for sustainable development".



- European association of enterprises CSR Europe develops an interesting program that follows the same direction.
- In Austria, at least five universities are innovatively changing in the leading universities in terms of sustainability. The educational program shall enable important personality change toward socially responsible and sustainable living.
- It is useful to know that there are many international documents on which we can rely. EU also provides support on this issue.

#### **4. Healthy eating in schools contributes to the health of individuals and thus to the health of society.**

- Sustainable and socially responsible approach to society and the environment includes responsible attitude to the food we eat. This should be healthy - organically grown, local food. If we don't use any locally produced food, we refuse the vitality and energy of the environment in which we live. Healthy eating is closely linked to human well-being. Without locally produced food we cannot be a successful community. With importing food we also import food patterns that are foreign to our cultural environment. Nutritional value of such food does not reach the value of organic, local food. Industrial paradigm in food production impoverishes its nutritional value as well. It is very important that each student acquires knowledge about the importance of local organic food consumption and that this is also enabled by the university.
- University shall provide information on organic food for all students and inform them about the importance of healthy food, provide them organic food meals (with student coupons), and raise the awareness of sport activities to additionally enhance a healthy lifestyle.
- Rectors' Conference and the University of Maribor shall prepare a formal initiative for systemic regulation of the organic and balanced food for students. They shall propose new criteria for concessions for student coupons system to the government and competent offices, which have to be in accordance with international recommendations for healthy nutrition (intake of micro-and macro-nutrients) and should take into account the energy and nutritional needs of the student population.
- University should require students' restaurants to provide local and organic food.
- Five faculties in University of Maribor have already included courses about the importance of healthy food, which are valued with three credit points. We suggest that UM include this content in all study programs for teachers.
- Universities should encourage students to become leaders of projects and activities that are related to sustainable development and social responsibility. This would allow students of higher classes to educate the newcomers, during the introduction week, about sustainable development and corporate social responsibility, raise awareness about the importance of healthy eating habits and a healthy lifestyle.

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#### **5. The use of intuition contributes to more holistic business decisions.**

- The current technological civilization will in the future need a non-technological innovation that will radically change existing habits.



- Intuition is more and more established. It highlights the holistic development of the individual. Using intuition contributes to more holistic decision-making and therefore to a more socially responsible behavior of individuals, groups and society.
- Business decision-making model by intuition has proved to be a different, innovative and holistic approach to decision-making. It offers a modern approach to finding systemic solutions, including intuitive, besides rational decisions.
- Intuition is the channel between conscious and the unconscious. Intuition consciously gives us access to the unconscious. Today, intuition is recognized as a weak signal, which will tomorrow become the main mechanisms of development.
- Intuition turns attention from the surrounding area to the inside. It helps the individual to identify and efficiently use one's inner potential. Model of interdependence of individuals, groups and companies allows us to use intuition to recognize the mutual reciprocal influences.
- The benefits of applying this business model to business: Changing the old patterns of employees' behavior. Improving relations between employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Improving employees' motivation. Networking relationships inside and outside the company. Self-sustainable business solutions with market orientation. Raising awareness on the use of intuition and the effective transfer of knowledge into practice.

#### **6. Corporate volunteering in organizations and the exchange of good practices in companies and institutions need to be strengthened.**

- Educating volunteers has to be considered seriously and needs to be a part of introduction into the volunteerism (if the organization takes volunteerism seriously, this way will be accepted by the volunteers as well).
- Promoting corporate volunteering in organizations enables employees to acquire knowledge and skills. This also reduces training costs. Corporate volunteering has to be connected to the company's business.
- The main barrier of the transfer of good practice, especially from abroad, is the executives' reluctance to change their mindset.
- Many companies that are socially responsible take this for granted and therefore don't point it out or promote it to the society around them.
- People can be organized in a way to manage and maintain long-term quality of their joint/shared ownership (e.g. in the case of common land).
- There is a lack of businesses role models of social responsibility. The existing ones are extremely successful, because social responsibility, in the long run, does not cause any uncovered costs, just benefits.

#### **7. Development of individual and organizational social policies in the direction of greater social responsibility is needed.**

- Self-initiative, organization and participation of individuals are necessary for the new progress.



- Persecution of corruption is socially responsible. Therefore Ethos Initiative tries to solve the existing cases in this area wishing, that they won't occur anymore in the future.
- UBI (Universal basic income) - reality or utopia. An initiative to collect signatures at the EU level has been launched and will last till 14.1.2014. If we want to tackle this seriously, the initiative has to be supported.
- The pressure on the political elite is required in order to include social responsibility and take its strategy as a priority topic at the state level.
- There is no sustainable development without social responsibility. It is one of the essential elements for the solution of the current crisis in Slovenia and abroad. The success will result from cooperation with other concepts, such as green economy, social entrepreneurship, new economy, etc.
- A shift in focus from the global to the local, especially in terms of self-sufficiency (food, energy) is inevitable. As an example, the 500 m<sup>2</sup> of land with extensive farming is enough for survival of one person, while on intense farming (the current model) 2000 m<sup>2</sup> of land is needed.

**8. In order to increase the knowledge of the concept of social responsibility, it has to be long-termly and properly communicated.**

- Corporate social responsibility starts at each individual; this is why the spreading of idea and awareness on it is of the utmost importance.
- Understanding and implementing social responsibility in the operation of each individual in human society guarantees creating a better and fairer society. Here, education and communication play a key role.
- Understanding and supporting the idea of social responsibility among consumers significantly impacts and rewards socially responsible work of companies.
- Socially responsible Team Building activities offer a great opportunity for the introduction of social responsibility in business, especially among employees.
- Socially responsible business operation is rewarded with various forms of rewards, with loyal consumers, support of local communities, various awards, prizes such as Horus, Golden Thread, and the European Award for Corporate Social Responsibility.
- There is much literature about communication of social responsibility; it would be reasonable to structure it for greater transparency for students.
- Computer games have a great potential, because at least 800 million people of all ages play with them, but only a few games educate for socially responsible behavior.
- Media in Slovenia can be and should be more efficient concerning social responsibility. They report very differently about corporate social responsibility. Newspaper with the highest number of articles about social responsibility issues is Dnevnik.
- Socially responsible editors see further. For that reason, management of media has to be educated about social responsibility in order to allow more posts on this topic.

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In Maribor, Slovenia, 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2013



In the name of lecturers and participants  
of the 8<sup>th</sup> IRDO international Conference

Dr. Dr. Matjaž Mulej, Prof. Emeritus,  
Head of the 8<sup>th</sup> IRDO international conference Program Committee and Head of Research board of  
IRDO Scientific research centre and IRDO Expert Board