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## THE CALL FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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### ABSTRACT

*Organisations do not live in a vacuum, they are part of communities and in order for them to live in harmony and survive, they have to be socially responsible. Being socially responsible leads to mutual understanding, social obligations and responsiveness. This article covers the need for being socially responsible.*

**KEY WORDS:** social responsibility, corporate social responsibility, ethics, corporate integrity, profit

### 1. INTRODUCTION

When generalised beyond the individual to the organisation, social responsibility is called corporate social responsibility (CSR), the notion that corporations are expected to go above and beyond following the law and making a profit (Kinicki and Williams, 2011:85). Corporations are part of the society, as they exist in that society. In that regard a corporate has to be responsible and must go beyond its way in meeting community's societal, economic and political needs. There are so many reasons that call for social responsibility which include facilitating health, education, informed and entertained society.

### 2. WHAT IS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

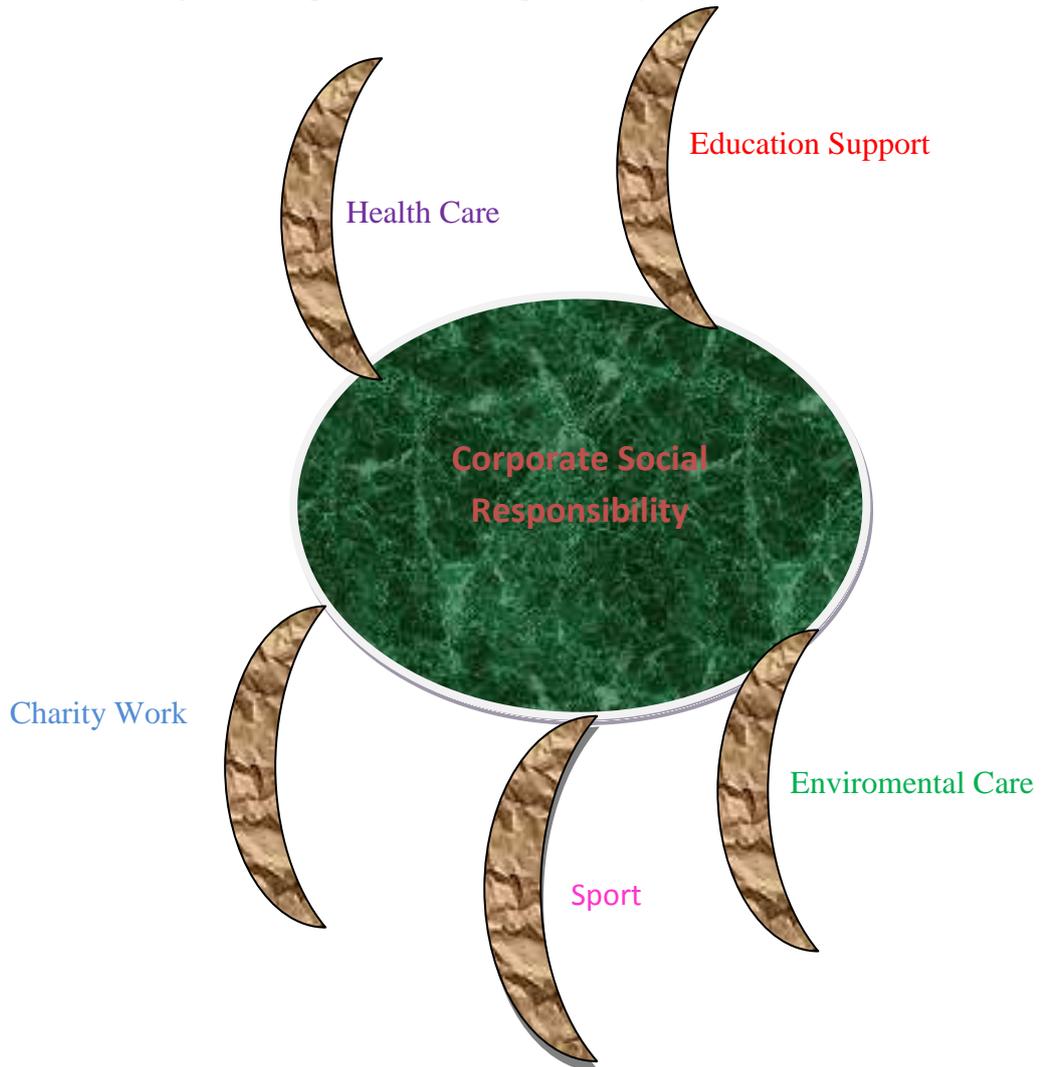
Social responsibility is defined by Ruth and Lubber (1994:17) as "a generic concept referring to the business organisation's concern and active two-way involvement with the the social, economic and political forces which influence the environment in which it exists". If ethical responsibility is about being good individual citizen, social responsibility is about being a good organisational citizen (Kinicki and Williams, 2011:85). Jones and George (2011:153) postulates that social responsibility is the

way a company's managers and employees view their duty or obligation to make decisions that protect enhance and promote the welfare and well being of stakeholders and society as a whole. Hopkins (1998) asserts that "corporate social responsibility is concerned with treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a socially responsible manner". It is a business firm's obligation, beyond the required by the law and economics to pursue long-term goals that are good for the society. Socially responsibility is whereby the organisations extent their services to benefit the community in terms of social and economical service for example in health and education,

### 3. REASONS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Harrison (1982:1) avers that companies if they are to continue to develop, must be projected in many directions and to many different targets. They must be projected internationally, nationally, regionally, locally and sectionally with such activities as central government, the civil service, education, local government, the civil training, the social services, the book trade and the staff themselves.

**Figure 1: Corporate Social Responsibility Forms**



**3.1 Solves the public’s problems**

Social responsibility helps in solving the public’s problems. Outlip et al (2006:124) advocates that “the right conduct takes into account the welfare of the large society as the professional helps clients solve problems”. Thus problems of the society are solved through helping the community. Organisations should address social problems before they become serious and costly to correct. If the community is in a healthy order, it benefits the organisations. Alley et at (2003:99) adds that” a healthy business environment benefits all firms and so firms have an interest in healthy business environment benefits all firms and so firms have an interest in healthy business environment and so have an interest in opening the market to new small businesses, making available resources and enterprise in which they themselves can flourish”. Relating positively to and inverting in the communities where a company’s customers and employees, live and work is a key component of Corporate Social Responsibility (Zimbabwe Independent, September 15to 21, 2006). Thus

corporations themselves benefit from a stable, well of society. The people in the community will be in a position to buy the corporation’s products and services, hence making the corporations survive.

Thus corporate social responsibility is important in handling the economic, social and political needs of the environment in which the corporate services. Social responsibility is concerned with giving back to the society. The organisations have the resources that make them help the environment in which it operate thus calling for social responsibility.

**3.2 Protects the environment**

Corporate social responsibility has a role in protecting the environment in which it services. This include reducing air pollution. Air pollution can be in different forms like air, water and land pollution. There is need for the protection of the environment for the benefit of the organisation and the society. Velaasquez (2005:268) proffers that “environmental issues raise large and complicated ethical and technological; questions for our business society...

How long will our natural resources last?. What obligations do firms have to future generations to preserve the environment and conserve our resources? Organisations should be involved in reducing global warming and cleaning up of the environment. For example BP Company is not afraid to address public perception that is negative towards its industry which includes global warming and natural resource sustainability. BP's John Brown was the first oil industry to acknowledge its impact on the environment and implement plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. BP has steadily increased its reputation as the green oil company. Thus, doing for the society and earns a company a good reputation. A good reputation attracts customers hence adding to future profits and prosperity.

### 3.3 Enhancing a better society

In corporate social responsibly, the company is not only looking for profit but how it is benefitting the society. The company would be considering the effects it has to the society. Butterfield (1999) alludes that every company, organisation or government body has relationships with groups of people who are affected by what it does or says. They might be employees, customers, stockholder, competitors, suppliers or just the general public. Since what the company does affects the community, the company must see to it that it does good things to the environment to promote mutual understanding and goodwill. This created a better society and a better society means a conducive environment for doing business. Kasambira and Nyamunda (2001:48) expound that "by investing in society today, business can turn today's problems into tomorrow's profits". Thus it results in future profits.

### 3.4 Meeting health needs

Social responsibility involves serving the community's health needs. This can be done through cleaning of the industrial areas, producing more products that are important in public's good health for example Unilever produces protect soap for the community's good health. A corporate can build a clinic for the benefit of the community. The media organisations can carry out some outreach programmes on health promotions. More space and time can be provided for health aspects on the newspapers, radio and television. Libraries and information centres can disseminate information on health awareness for example cholera outbreaks. Information on HIV/AIDS management can be provided by libraries and information centres as well as the media. Community broadcasting on health aspects can be introduced, Thus creating a health awareness community. The media can ask for sponsorship on certain health aspects The Herald (March 2005) produces an article which requested for the sponsorship of Harare Hospital under the headline "Harare Hospital in Intensive Care". Many

companies responded in assisting the hospital thereby meeting the community's health needs.

### 3.5 Education

Education can be promoted due to social responsibility. Sati (2004) opines that "a lot of money goes into this area because education is the foundation of natural and social progress". Thus education promotes social, economic and political development hence leading to national development. Organisations would benefit in getting qualified employees and experts who would give ideas to companies for prosperity. An educated or literate society would communicate better with corporations hence leading to mutual understanding. The educated society also produces employees for the companies.

Organisations can help in the educational development of societies through contributions of bank loan to college students as well as grants and sponsorship of students through bursaries and scholarships, For example, the National Breweries once offered bursaries to several students at the University of Zimbabwe. Chigago Bulls build a new reading and learning centre at some schools. Econet plays a major role in educational social responsibility. Thus the educational needs of the community are promoted.

### 3.6 Charity

Social; responsibility helps in making charitable contributions to the community. This includes supporting the underprivileged for example street kids and children at children's homes, For example Fire Brigade used to provide entertainment services to Upenyu Hutswa Children's Home in Highfield, Harare towards Christmas. Spar supermarkets also sometimes provide food to the children's homes. Thus, helping the needy.

### 3.7 Good Publicity

Social responsibility results in good publicity therefore earning a company good reputation. Being social responsible should also bring the organisation the benefit of avoiding negative media coverage. Bad publicity affects the organisation greatly as the audience would fail to trust the organisation The City of Harare has its reputation tarnished as the media coverage is mostly negative which include uncollected refuse but the City of Harare has also quite a number of beneficial things that it does, this will not be noticed because of negative publicity.

Once an organisation has something that reveals or even give the positive that its products or service are unsafe or unreliable as well as the existence of corruption, it would lose the public trust thereby leading to its collapse, For example their was once an assumption through advertising that a drink called Musimbiti would treat HIV/AIDS while in actual fact it was doing more harm than good to the people. This at that time results in the abolition of the

drink. Social responsibility is called for to give safe services to the community in return the community trusts the organisations which would justify the existence of the organisation in the community.

### 3.8 Understanding the country's legislation

Social responsibility helps in making organisations follow and understand the country's legislation. Robbins and Coulter (2005) assert that "by becoming social responsible businesses can expect less government regulation". More strict laws are put due to the lack of social obligations and social responsibility by some organisations and the public in general. They need to follow the county legislation as well as international laws. If the organisations avoid breaking laws, they would not loose lots of money in paying fines that money would be used for both the development of companies and the society. Corporations must be responsible to the government, local authorities and some other legal groups to promote the legal responsibility hence leading to corporate governance.

### 3.9 Sporting Activities

Organisations can also give back to the community through enhance and facilitating sporting activities. They can sponsor different types of sports. City of Harare for example has played a great role in facilitating sporting activities to the communities. It has also introduced sporting competitions for different local authorities.

### 3.10 Employee satisfaction and motivation

The employees should be satisfied and motivated due to social responsibility. The employees are crucial resources in organisations as they are the only resource that can think and make things happen. They are to be rewarded through high incentives, conducive working environment, housing, transport, entertainment and educational services. The City of Harare used to provide its employees study advances that do not accrue any interests. Some workers are provided with descent accommodation and other getting stands, this resulting in employee retention and the company and in retaining qualified and experienced human capital. They City of Harare

also offered employment to some National Youth training graduates as a form of social responsibility. This leads to mutual understanding and employees are motivated to even work harder therefore results in increased productively. Motivated employees also serve the community better. They are in a position to provide the social responsibility services to the community.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Organisations should be always be reminded that they do not live in s vacuum and they need to give back to eth community. The community is the reason for the organisation's survival. Social responsibly is called for to protect the environment, to facilitate health, education and sport services in the communities.

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### Bio-Data

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