

**THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE
WELFARE DEPARTMENT, OF THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS
AIRES**

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SUMMARY

The article reflects on the social responsibility of the organizations, especially in public university institutions understood as socially responsible. Considering the social responsibility of universities as a key player in the processes of social change, we share the experience of the Department of Students' Welfare of the Faculty of Economics, University of Buenos Aires (EGF) and its leading role as a development factor within the community.

KEY WORDS: Social Responsibility; Organizations; University Social Responsibility; Voluntary; Public University.

INTRODUCTION

The notion of social responsibility refers, by those who make up the organizations, an

attitude of openness as to the needs of the communities that links its activity.

Thus, it can be said that when social responsibility is assumed and expressed in actions that are manifested in concrete actions, these actions and these facts contribute to improving the quality of average life of the communities concerned.

In that way, the exercise of social responsibility can move towards more inclusive and integrated communities in a progressive alignment of the organizations for increased permeability of the complexity of social dynamics and their emerging needs. To put it in another way, social responsibility allows that there be more and better communities, since it strengthens bonds and relationships that constitute it.

Thus it is necessary that social responsibility awareness by those who, for their performance in organizational settings, are called to take on as much to promote the implementation. An awareness of the place occupied in the social scale, both the individual within the organization, as the site of the organization itself in its various contexts. We speak of the place occupied, either as part of their activity in the value chains in which it acts, or in the markets where it competes. This also means the role which it plays in interaction with the physical, social, economic, political, etc. environment.

That awareness is essential to turn on some idea of the general context, a certain understanding of time and the world we live in, in its historical context. A certain understanding of where we are and how we got there because the exercise of social responsibility is directly linked to a perception-located in time and space of the individual as an ethical subject. Because awareness by the individual, their place in the social scale and scope of their decisions - is a prerequisite for a realistic view of social responsibility it has to bear in its situation.

From what he practice of social responsibility is, it is an attitude in continuous interaction with the factual conditions, cultural or institutional organization of each and every role in the dynamics that it is inserted in. In its historical genesis there is a demand, which responded to specific emergency, as response to the abuse of dominance by large firms that emerged in the

heat of industrialism and within the framework of the height of the factory as an organizational model.

Since then, we can state that, overall, the level of social responsibility in organizations depends largely on the level and quality of effective demand which takes place in communities to which it relates. This means that the level of social responsibility is largely determined by what communities reclaim of their organizations.

This, however, is an exception when it comes to university social responsibility, whose deployment in Latin America is far above the demands of higher education, to which is the present objective.

DEVELOPMENT

The emergence of social responsibility, its emergence and development as demand for the population, has been accentuated in the last decades of the twentieth century as they universalized the market as a social system, and gave impetus to neo-liberalism. In a parallel way and as a result of the new liberal wave, it would severely restrict the scope and extent of the state and, in a concomitantly way, the scope of the policy against the hegemony of the economy, which has become the dogma of new world order.

This new order enjoyed a brief heyday in the last decade of the century, its predecessors had been the governments of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in England, which had immediate antecedents in Latin American dictatorships, especially the Chilean and Argentine ones, where the premises of market liberalization and severe limitation of state action, were irradiated to the world.

The results of that process were visible to all. None of the promises of neoliberals were fulfilled, their predictions were not infallible and social problems did not cease to worsen globally. The massive deregulation of markets generated unprecedented economic

concentration and the alleged spillover effect did not even leak over all.

The mutilation of the functions of the states which were brought to a minimum, did not mean greater freedom for the deployment of society, but instead, made an increasing anomie factor of disintegration in human communities.

Globalization, therefore factual and legacy of the new order introduced by neoliberalism and barely awakened utopias and generates a rather negative consensus about the benefits that it generates or can generate – and how they are distributed, in fact, between different segments of the population.

The role of the past half century was embodied in a specific type of organization: the enterprise.

But that role emphasized the role that every organization is called to exercise in these turbulent times.

A role that becomes manifest in all social organizations, including as regards the State at all levels, but also specifically at the local level. Because that is where it is called to perform a function unavoidable in the immediate community, the place where people live, because that is where the economy impacts: where it affects the quality of daily lives of individuals and groups which integrate into the community, who share the same geographic space and a set of common cultural norms.

It was intended, smugly, that dreams of saving society had ended. In return, they offered other dreams: the salvation of the individual by the market.. A dream which for most, ended up being a nightmare.

The increasingly sharp social liability claims directed to the business world implies market failure as a social order based solely on the law of supply and demand. The mythical invisible hand that supposedly guaranteed the best self-regulation proved to be a tight web of interests behind the enterprises and institutions.

These interests have proven to be true only to themselves. Values are often claimed that

only recognize a dynamic pricing. But what it is proposing, in fact, is a political demand in the most basic sense of the idea, which refers to dealing with community issues, transcending the merely individual to consider the collective. Because when demanding the social responsibility in the movement one assumes a political attitude. Pero también es cierto que se trata de una política que no siempre se atreve a decir su nombre, por el desprestigio que pesa sobre ella. It is also true that this is a policy that not always dares to speak its name, due to the smear hanging over it.. This is in large part, by the subordination of political practice economic interests often incompatible with democracy.

The notion of social responsibility as applied to individuals and organizations, in correlation with their relative position in society allows a sustainable link between democracy and market. This is because it humanizes the economy dynamics, incorporating consideration of their effects, both immediate and strategic, in the populations on which it impact.

Promoting social responsibility in individuals and organizations also implies a political stance and a political decision, as aforesaid, in the sense of dealing with community issues for better living and less inequality.

Then, from the perspective of social responsibility, that it is something as simple as dealing with community issues. To be responsible. To commit oneself. To respond. The sharing of responsibility and yet for each one, as part of a set that transcends it.

We talk about a range that depends on the degree of cohesion, of sustainability over time of relations that constitute that community. Hence, the social responsibility emerge as a true condition of possibility for democratic utopia that is necessary to assume the task of collectively in the century that begins in the realization of which there is a better quality of life for everyone, especially those who are deprived of the care of their most basic and fundamental needs.

Social Responsibility, organizations and State

As mentioned above, social responsibility arises to combine individual responsibility with institutional responsibilities. This includes both the responsibility of individual members of each organization, which is relative to its position in it, as the organization's institutional responsibility for the consequences resulting to the development of their activity. Thus, the perspective of social responsibility to define and determine the level of effective contribution to the welfare of the whole corresponding to the different social actors involved, individually and collectively.

Moreover, from a qualitative point of view, this social responsibility is defined also by the nature of the activity that the organization develops. Thus, social responsibility differs in its nature and manifestations if the organization is an enterprise, state or social, because the sense of the activities performed by them is different, because they fulfill different functions in social dynamics, which in turn determines substantial differences in the impact it has on the various communities with which it is linked within the community. But among the differences, the most significant is what makes the lucrative nature of business organizations, as the distributed benefits are drawn from the community, which in turn outsources virtually all the activity costs.

But beyond the merely quantitative, the most relevant social efficiency of the organizations linked to the fact that the organization is a matter of costs, once outsourced, the community manifests them as damage that adversely affect the quality of life of the public directly or indirectly linked to the activity of the organization, which ultimately goes to the sustainability of the social group itself in time.

With respect to public universities, it should be noted once again that social responsibility is determined entirely by the fact that an organism that is part of a greater integration, which is the national State, whose action, in democracy as directed-by mandate of the society from which arises its legitimacy - the common welfare.

Undoubtedly it is necessary to set specific parameters for a realistic assessment of the social responsibility that corresponds to the activities, both as profit - that are deployed as part

of the market, as the solidarity ones - emerging in civil society or those well-oriented common welfare, which are inherent to the very existence of the democratic State, to its original mandate.

In the particular case of Argentina, from the preamble of the Constitution, the common good is defined as general well-being clearly refers to the quality of life of the population, which comprises all persons who are within the limits of our territory, which can be interpreted as a constitutional basis for defining a political, economic and social development of universal inclusion.

The idea of well-being linked to the quality of life, can be understood in correlation with the level of sustainability of effective care of social needs, ensuring a minimum flotation level for the whole population.

So in this sense it can be assumed that the starting point of the function of the democratic state to our constituents, were the needs of residents, whose care needs depends both on the physical survival of individuals and their full integration into society as a whole.

The democratic State implies a rule of law. The consistency of this state is fed back into the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the state, called to resolve the problems of human populations mainly generated by the action of an unbridled market. It is the responsibility of the State to establish an effective regulatory framework for the social whole, which effectively guarantees respect for the rights enshrined in the existing social contract: a contract that defines the direction and defines the scope of society and institutions developed within the community.

Today, for the democratic state, this means a challenge that one cannot afford alone, because, given the conditions under which the state has to deploy its action, the command exceeds its capabilities, both material and symbolic, for historical reasons that we found in the evolution of the Western economic order, particularly during the second half of the twentieth century.

The public university has not remained untouched by the social effects of that stage. With the restoration of democracy in the eighties, both in Argentina and the rest of Latin

America, the University was faced with the challenge of lost time due to dictatorships, and the resulting discontinuity in the development and evolution of institutions of democracy - when faced with the new wave of neo-liberalism which served as the preamble to the effective consolidation of that new globalization order.

Social Responsibility and the Public University

State University, free and secular-is a key component of Argentina's society from its origins in the national community in whose future it is inserted. As mentioned, the current period we call globalization is characterized as a time of emergencies; the great inequalities of the industrial order have only deepened in recent decades.

In the information society and knowledge and in the beginning of the twenty-first century, the University began to have a public role as almost no other state institution, in terms of their impact on present and future projection. Therefore, to assume it as a central theme and situated in the center of the scene seems unavoidable in the world we live in, which one needs define reference points to address the actions required by the circumstances.

It is in these circumstances that the companies are claiming from their organizations, be they political, and economic or civil societies, which further embody ethical values required for better living and equitable development of the communities which they comprise.

Thus, the university community is a place of belonging of thousands of people and gives them meaning in their lives, in so far as forging a shared identity. These people are integrated in different ways, consistent with the roles they assume in their institutional framework, either as teachers or graduate students in career, and non-teachers or staff.

This perception of membership to any organization to the community in which it is inserted, this awareness that there is no community organization, is the starting point to assume a new and necessary foundational commitment.

This commitment means taking social responsibility for each one and how they are

articulated in the organizations involved, and must necessarily manifest themselves in different aspects related to the institutional activity.

The notion of social responsibility, which arises from the demands of various sectors related to business organization to take into account their interests, evolved into a perspective that encompasses the set of organizations, including organizations in education.

In this way was installed the problem of social responsibility as academic concern, which attracts a growing interest reflected in the proliferation of approaches from different disciplines, not always sufficiently interconnected. The reflection on the university social responsibility in the area in question, can address conceptually different aspects related to organizational identities which defines their nature.

However, the role of university is significant volunteers and practical living expression of solidarity and a commitment to act within the paradigm of social responsibility. Multitude of organizations of all types are related to the phenomenon of volunteerism, which goes beyond the structures and manifests itself even outside them, the individual initiative of many people who develop this activity anonymously, timely or continuously, in bounded domains, based on social needs directly which for some reason do not have other coverage.

As mentioned, the University of Buenos Aires, on which the State University has three pillars for its activity. They are the academic formation, research and university extension.

These are also characteristic of the University of Buenos Aires, free and unrestricted access This, together with their membership in the public education and a government exercised with the concurrence of all cloisters, confirm the special bond that links it with society and the quality of their engagement and is what ensures that internal democracy and university autonomy.

For the public, universities are due to the emerging society, to the extent that it is from there where the resources to make it possible to have an area of freedom which generates knowledge, reflection and research. This is like this from the moment that it is from the whole of

society where you get those resources, including the contribution of the most neglected. Hence, the output of the public university must imperatively be directed towards building the common good, which from our Constitution means, from the Preamble, in terms of general welfare.

The efforts carried out by the university community of our country are a real source of pride, as seen in the number of projects surveyed as part of National Volunteer Program, carried out by the Ministry of Education Office.

But the scale of the problems remaining becomes insufficient to resolve any initiative of direct action and more than necessary for the emphasis on the promotion of volunteerism as social responsibilities to generate greater awareness in the whole social body.

The experience of the Faculty of Economics, University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and its commitment to university social responsibility

The Faculty of Economics, University of Buenos Aires (FCE) is one of the most important places of study of our country, and as such it is also an area of belonging for those who are part of the university community and, considering that there are seventy thousand people who develop their activities on a daily basis, it being the largest in Latin America.

To develop the solidarity potential of the FE and construction capabilities in relation to the social environment that makes sense is the biggest challenge now facing the university community. This is an essential factor contributing to the construction of the desired future for the entire country. Because the place occupied by the relevant higher learning in Argentine society implies a responsibility to society as a whole, for the environment that provides embodiment and rationale to the university and its institutions.

The Faculty of Economics, BAU has not remained apart from this trend and is related in articulation with other educational institutions on the continent, to share experiences and improve their oriented social responsibility. The implementation of these actions, in regard to the specific case of the FE, sets off from taking the added responsibility that corresponds to part of

the public university, which largely determined a greater openness to the community and channel configuration complementation between the State, enterprises and social organizations.

The experience of the FE-University of Buenos Aires. The path

For six years, in the context of developing outreach programs to the community, the FE-UBA implemented a series of programs as a result of the implementation and development activities of the University Social Responsibility.

In 2006 occurred the first record and various institutional initiatives promoted from the FE, as the creation of the Directorate for the Promotion of Social Responsibility of the University Extension Department, the National Center for Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Capital as Res.CD 830/06 and the University Volunteer Program was institutionalized, as an expression of social responsibility of universities (Res.CD 457/06). Note that since 2006 have been 15 projects approved by the University Volunteer Program of the Ministry of Education's Office.

As from 2007 there was promoted the joint curriculum with teaching and editing of publications related to the topic. In that year he published *La pequeña Guía para el Voluntario*, (The Small Guide for the Volunteer), detailing the lines and methods of working, and elaborates on the theme of university social responsibility. Its aim is to disseminate the program and is useful for training new volunteers.

Also in 2007, with the intention of linking teaching with university extension in the curriculum of the careers of Business Administration and Public Accountant, Seminary Application on Integration and Social Projects (Res.CD 291/07) were included, which proposes the development of community projects. To date they have completed the seminar in 7 quarters after, about 250 students, resulting in generating 29 projects many of them being implemented partially or fully.

In 2008 the program Amartya Sen (Res.CD 3047/08 was introduced and 3168/08) an

outreach program in ethics training and development for advanced students and recent graduates of the FE-UBA. Its central purpose is to train a new generation of teachers to the highest standards of excellence in new areas of knowledge development and management science perspective of ethics and social responsibility. At the end of that year the first 100 youths graduated in this program which is now national.

In 2009 they prepared and published the book *Seminario de Integración y Aplicación en Proyectos Sociales* (ISBN 978-950-29-1173-1), (Integration and Application Seminar on Social Projects) with chapters written by the faculty of the Seminary and other specialists in the area, posing a conceptual and methodological approach to social problems and social intervention from the perspective of the RSU and special emphasis on the application of knowledge and tools learned during the course of their career. There was also a second edition of Amartya Sen forming 100 professionals.

In 2010 the National Solidarity Education Program recognizes it as an important education practice, outstanding it in the Seminar on Integration and Social Projects Implementation in the Presidential Award Solidarity Educational Practices in Higher Education 2010.

In order to strengthen the ties of the FE-UBA with the community, one generated an optional subject for all courses of the Faculty of Economics, UBA, called Honorary Chair Dr. Bernardo Kliksberg Practice for Social Inclusion (Res.CD 291/10), which aims to engage students in concreting social interventions, which use tools and knowledge learned in their careers.

This subject is common to all careers and given in FE and is developed through a combination of classroom and conducting field work group consisting of an educational practice, supportive and inclusive. At the end of the semester students develop a practice report, based on the format recommended by the chair.

Graduates of the program Amartya Sen accompany students throughout the work

process and the generation of conclusions from the experience. In just two four months periods attended by 250 students, developed specific intervention practices in over 21 different social organizations.

Finally, in order to strengthen and consolidate the role, the University Extension School, created the Program of Voluntary Social Practices Res.CD 334/10), which formalizes and articulates the workspaces of Student Welfare Departments and University Extension which are related to social projects, namely: the University Volunteer Program, the Integration and Implementation Workshop, focusing on social projects, the Honorary Chair Dr. Bernardo Kliksberg Practice for Social Inclusion; the National Prize Amartya Sen, the Entrepreneur Development Centre GEN 21, the Comprehensive Assistance Office to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Museum of Foreign Debt (MDE) and Program Linking with Secondary Schools.

In 2011 there is nationally presented the Amartya Sen program, involving 300 young people each year and added to 25 public universities nationwide. In its project work with society, participating students, graduates, faculty and staff, through the methodology of service-learning, knowledge put into operation projects and solidarity actions for the benefit of the community, generate positive impacts. These actions seek to promote ethics and social responsibility to generate and train professionals, recognized not only by the quality of technical education, but also for their social commitment, thereby enhancing the training of the Faculty.

Through its various activities, the Student Welfare Department and its whole staff offers students and graduates of the Faculty a different approach to professional training. Consisting of including in it the practical space that is contact with the nearest reality, where not only one has to apply the knowledge acquired during the career, but also contribute to the generation of professionals concerned and committed to social issues.

In 2012, 26 universities have joined the program Amartya Sen.

Books such as Responsabilidad Social Universitaria have been published University,

(University Social Responsibility), Desarrollo y gestión de proyectos (Development and project management). The role of universities in building a new social paradigm (ISBN 978-950-29-1347-6) and La responsabilidad social (Social Responsibility). Prácticas Universitarias para la inclusión social (ISBN 978-950-29-1347-6). (University practices for social inclusión) (ISBN 978-950-29-1347-6). También se han desarrollado una serie de publicaciones realizadas por I, la Guía de líderes de proyecto y la Guía de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad civil. We have also developed a series of publications carried out by La Guía de Líderes del Proyecto (the Project Leaders Guide) and the Guía de las Orgnizaciones de la Sociedad Civil, (The Guide for Civil Society Organizations).

CONCLUSION

Our present is marked by a new challenge for the future: the pursuit of social responsibility in the service of sustainable democracy.

It is key is taking the lead role of universities in social change processes, as knowledge-generating institution. The university social responsibility has the right framework to design and conduct outreach activities that have established ties of solidarity with the society of which of the Faculty forms part.

The challenge is to take the paradigm of social responsibility as the hub of university extension projects and proposals of teaching in the curriculum, creating synergy between the two areas of work.

One must highlight that for each activity one should put into practice the research tools, through which one reaches a diagnosis of the true state of the organizations and in the populations in which they work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please refer to articles Spanish bibliography.