

Glossary of social terms

B

Business ethics

Taking account of the moral aspect in business, i.e. applying solutions that combine moral requirements with the strategic interests of a firm. Business ethics determines ethical standards of behaviour, norms and values as well as conduct in a business.

C

Code of ethics

A set of rules that regulate moral life. A code of ethics in business indicates specific 'behaviours' of an organization, in addition to general guidelines concerning reliability and integrity required in business and actions that are conducive to social development and not contradictory to moral standards and collective customs.

Corporate community involvement

Involvement of a firm in social issues and participating in solutions of social problems. This concept is narrower than corporate social responsibility and it refers to different activities of a company in a community. It includes various forms of involvement, such as financial support, material assistance and voluntary work of employees. Community involvement makes a firm more reliable in the eyes of the general public and builds a positive image.

Corporate social responsibility

The strategy that provides for a firm to take account voluntarily of social interests while trying to achieve its economic aims, taking decisions and actions. CSR includes the consideration for ethical rules, rights of employees and human rights as well as the social and natural environment. It is assumed that the corporate social responsibility should be an integral part of the business policy, together with its economic objectives.

Corporate volunteering

This involves employees of a firm in voluntary work for social organizations. Employees (volunteers) perform various types of work for those in need, by using their skills and abilities and developing their talents in such areas. A firm supports its employees in such actions and, depending on its organizational culture, appoints employees to work as volunteers during working time or provides material assistance or logistic and financial support.

D

Donation

A form of an agreement by which a donor undertakes to provide free-of-charge performance with its assets. A donation may be granted by individuals or corporations. The subject matter of the donation may include real properties, movables, money as well as rights or may involve free provision of services.

G

Global Compact

The world's largest initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for corporate responsibility and sustainable development. The Polish Global Compact Local Network is coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Project Office. Since it was launched in 2000, over 9,000 members from 135 countries have joined the initiative. Global Compact calls on companies to embrace in their activities ten principles in the areas of: human rights, labor rights, environmental protection, counteracting corruption and promoting corporate social responsibility.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is an independent institution with its seat in the Netherlands that develops and promotes so-called Sustainability Reporting Guidelines. GRI Guidelines are applied all over the world. They may be used by all companies that are ready to submit comprehensive reports on their economic, environmental and social activity. Since 2006, the third version of the GRI Guidelines applies, so-called G3. The organization has introduced a three-level system of applications: from the highest that includes the largest scope of revealed information, i.e. about 80 reporting indexes (A, A+), to the smallest, with less than 40 indexes (C, C+). A plus before each level means the external verification of the report by an independent certifying authority.

H

Human capital

Employees of a firm who contribute to its operation and development and have specific knowledge, skills and talents.

L

Local community

The group of people who live in the area and are connected by social bonds, common tradition and culture. A local community is formed by inhabitants of villages, towns, cities or municipalities.

M

Mission

A set of fixed aims and targets of a firm. It contains values that are upheld by the management board and are the basis for determining its actions. The mission determines the identity of a firm and its organizational culture.

N

Non-governmental organization (NGO)

A voluntary organization that operates independently of state or political structures and whose operation is not profit oriented. It works for social issues and development. Its operation is based mostly on voluntary work.

O

Organizational culture

Organizational culture A set of standards, values, forms of behaviour, attitudes, premises and symbols that determine the mode of thinking and acting in a company and define standards of communication and conduct.

S

Social dialogue

The exchange of information and presentation of positions concerning social problems and issues between parties that may be public institutions, entrepreneurs or NGOs. It is a form of representing the interests of parties. The source of success is reliable information exchanged between the parties and cooperation.

Social programme

Planned actions aimed at solving or counteracting a specific social problem. They may be implemented jointly or independently by public institutions, businesses or social organizations.

Social report

A report issued by a firm that presents its whole strategy and social policy. It takes account of economic, social and ecological aspects of its operations.

Sponsoring

Joint obligations of two parties – a sponsor and a sponsoree. A sponsor provides funds, material assistance or services to the sponsoree in return for promotion. Sponsoring is a planned and conscious act aimed at creating a positive image of a firm. It is often a part of the long-term marketing strategy of a business.

Sustainable development

The path of social and economic development that is in harmony with the natural environment. The idea of sustainability provides for the skilful use of resources (social, human and natural), so that they can be used in the future.