

SUMMARY REPORT

on workshop (World Café) held within the Club of Florence seminar “Life Cycles of Responsibility – about generations, pension funds and sustainability driven strategies”

Date: 20.02.2016

Place: Chalet Fontana, Florence, Italy

Facilitators: Zufar Ashurov – Researcher, Tashkent State University of Education, Uzbekistan
Brigitte Mauel – Co-founder and Secretary of the Club of Florence, Italy

Number of participants: 15

The intention of organizing this kind of workshop in the “World Café” format was to find out that in what extent people know about responsibilities of corporations in regard to the future generations for their social, economic and environmental benefits. So the question was formulated as:

In your personal view, what should be the responsibilities of corporations for future generations for their social, economic and environmental benefits?

The process

It is commonly known that the “World Café” format is a structured conversational process intended to facilitate open and intimate discussion, and link ideas within a larger group to access the “collective intelligence” or collective wisdom in the room. So the overall diverse group of participants in a number of 15 people consisting of company directors, founders, lawyers, researchers and other corporate governance professionals was divided into three small groups of five participants each, who sat around a table and were discussing an open-ended question during a round of discussion for a structured amount of time. A round of conversation lasted between 10–15 minutes. In every 10-15 minutes of discussion the participants moved between a series of tables where they continued the discussion in response to the question. When participants switched tables after 10-15 minutes time, a “table host” at the new table briefly welcomed incoming participants and filled them in on highlights of the previous discussion.

The groups were handed out flipcharts to write, make notes and draw on it their answers for the question, so that when participants changed tables they could see what previous members have expressed in their own words. In the course of discussion the small groups’ focus was to identify and explore the corporations’ responsibilities for future generations by separating them in social, economic and environmental responsibilities. They needed to be innovative, creative and open thinking on the topic rather than to solve problem or find a predetermined answer.

Participants had three rounds of discussion in response to defined question, taking the ideas from one group and adding to them, developing insights through multiple conversations with a diverse number of people, and expanding the collective knowledge of the group. In this way the participants gathered a wide range of inputs that helped identify and explore the responsibilities of corporations for future generations. After the end of all rounds the table hosts were invited to present and share the results from discussions and their opinions and thoughts written on their flipcharts which underpin the answer for the main question.

The results

Group 1 of which a table host was Mr. Wolfram Schmitt (Germany) disagreed with separation of corporations' responsibilities to social, economic and environmental, and stated that the corporations, in regard to future generations, should be responsible in whole for:

- Getting license to operate;
- Complying with laws and other rules;
- Using sustainable resources in effective and efficient way;
- Taking care of recycling and renewables;
- Company savings;
- Creating long-term incentives for employees;
- Creating attractive working environment;
- Being attractive for youngsters;
- Good corporate culture;
- Transportation for employees;
- Being a good family.

Group 2 of which a table host was Mrs. Claudia Schneckenburger (Germany) stated that the corporations, in regard to future generations, should be responsible for:

- ✓ Long-term decision for corporation;
- ✓ Environmental protection;
- ✓ Alignment of different stakeholder's conflict of interests;
- ✓ Individual responsibility of each person;
- ✓ Sustainable stakeholder engagement;
- ✓ Giving younger generation (of 20-30 years old) a fair share in decision making process;
- ✓ Generations equilibrium;
- ✓ Employee satisfaction;
- ✓ Strong management committed to sustainable aims;
- ✓ Communications (internal and external) with stakeholders;
- ✓ Corporate culture;
- ✓ Being open to reflection and development;
- ✓ Sustainable profitability;
- ✓ Optimizing size of complexity;
- ✓ Focus on organical growth vs. acquisitive growth.

Group 3 of which a table host was Mr. Georg Senoner (Italy) discussed a question with specific approach by clustering the corporation's responsibilities to social, economic and environmental, and stated that the corporations, in regard to future generations, should be responsible for:

Social responsibilities:

- ⇒ Creating sustainable employment;
- ⇒ Holding dialog with stakeholders;
- ⇒ Fair treatment of, fair pay for employees;
- ⇒ Taking care of children of the employees;
- ⇒ Contribution to young generations;

Economic responsibilities:

- ⇒ Integrating activities across nations;
- ⇒ Making long-term profits;
- ⇒ Contributing to growing market value;
- ⇒ Paying taxes and other obligatory payment;
- ⇒ Finding sources for investment;
- ⇒ Maintaining corporate culture;

Environmental responsibilities:

- ⇒ Sustainable environment;
- ⇒ Waste water treatment;
- ⇒ Disclosing environmental impact.

Conclusion and our thoughts

In fact, the responsibilities of corporations which they should feel in regard to future generations are a lot and diverse. In the 21st century it is deemed that the corporations are not just parties of an economy but the powerful force for economic growth of the country. Hence, the corporations should be highly responsible for the future economic and social sustainability of the country, and thus, for the future generations residing in it. To conclude and summarize the results of the workshop, we can state that the corporations, in regard to future generation's economic benefit, should be responsible for paying taxes and other obligatory payments, for contributing to market to grow, for increasing long-term profits to maximize shareholders' income, for investing in economically beneficial projects, for minimizing the production costs to make the goods be more accessible and procurable, for producing quality products to foster the robust and healthy generations; in regard to future generation's social benefit, should be responsible for maintaining sustainable employment and creating new job places, for keeping residences safe from environmental issues, for establishing good corporate culture, for childcare of employees, for education and raising competence of the young generation, for material and moral welfare of society by donating to local charities and foundations; in regard to future generation's environmental benefit, should be responsible for managing and using the natural resources effectively and efficiently to preserve them for using by future generation, for minimizing wastes and using green technologies for environmental protection, for producing ecologically clean production, and for maintaining sustainable environment to our children.