

Trisector Collaboration, Responsibility and Public Tasks

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Abstract

The issue of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), in the meantime, is discussed to such an extent, that corporations as well as academics in the western world know sufficiently about how to strategically deal with societal demands in order to prevent harming societies or parts thereof (stakeholders), on the one hand, or their negative reactions towards organisations, on the other. In other words, nowadays, corporations know how to react after launching an unsafe product, how to communicate after a fraud scandal, how to convince a wider public that they had to lay off thousands of employees. Additionally, CSR rating agencies have been working on the professionalisation of the public debate and have taken over the function of the public conscience. The responsibility towards people, planet and profit are neatly defined and there is sufficient knowledge about making these terms operational.

One of the greater challenges in CSR, however, is the poverty issue, often referred to as BoP issue. Poverty does not only lead to sometimes miserable living conditions for the poor, but also to limited sustainability as consequence of a lack of education and the use of inappropriate material in dealing with daily needs.

It is often argued that national governments alone cannot sufficiently cope with the issues of poverty, development NGOs and IOs often lack the financial, people and knowledge resources to deal with the issue and Business organisations in many cases do not have access to the poor and lack the financial incentives. On the other hand, an argument often brought forward in the BoP debate focuses on the great business opportunities of roughly 1.300.000.000 US \$ consumption potential. Business experiences show that one dose packages of conventional mass products find access to BoP markets and possibly improve hygienic conditions of poor families. Bush-proof equipment, especially designed for the needs of farmers in underdeveloped rural areas tend to be marketable and even profitable. Micro financing and micro insurances provide help for individuals and families for affordable costs and are profitable for the financing or insurance company.

In many cases, empirically speaking, BoP approaches are inter-sector or tri-sector partnerships, wherein the partners have clearly different possible contributions and furthermore, different motive and payoffs from their joint projects.

This paper collects cases and descriptions of BoP cases and initiatives and focuses on the desired and expected financial and non-financial outcome of these cases with respect to the partners involved. Furthermore, his paper analyses BoP initiatives with respect to the societal outcomes thereof and analyses patterns in the overall structures of incentives, contributions, financial payoff and other payoffs (e.g. legitimacy and access). To what extent, thus, is societal benefit of BoP initiatives related to certain motives of the partners in these initiatives.