

Research Report

Output 07

Hecos for Ethics (HECOS)

Final version

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

This report presents a status update on challenges companies as well as NGOs in a number of European countries face in the area of CSR and sustainability. The aim with this study is to develop in-depth understanding for what areas CSR managers and other representatives of companies and NGOs view as of key importance for their organizations and their professional roles. In addition, the study covers questions of ethical challenges the respondents face in working with CSR and sustainability issues, what ethical skills they experience as most valuable for them, and what kinds of knowledge and experiences they think are needed in the future in order to continue the work within the area.

The research report will be used as a foundation in the work of designing and creating new, innovative CSR training courses within the Erasmus+ project Hecos for Ethics (HECOS).

1.2. Method and data

Important to note is that this report is based on interview data and that the questionnaires used were composed in an explorative mode. The time frame for the study as well as the set up of an international team with many collaborators conducting interviews, with varied experiences from as well interviewing as research means that the data must be seen as indications of likely patterns rather than thoroughly analysed scientific evidence. This is both a strength and a weakness with the study. It is a strength since we during a short and intensive period could gather a lot of data from a number of companies and NGOs in different countries. It is a weakness since it was not possible to conduct all interviews with the same scientific stringency. This means that comparisons between the cases and nations must be done carefully. Still, we have a rich database and when the questionnaires were constructed we had

both the strengths and weaknesses of the applied method in mind. Therefore we are confident of that the data is both rich and representative and works well as indications of likely patterns of how companies and NGOs in Europe experience challenges in working with sustainability issues as well as what needs for training in the area they see. Important to note is that we do not consider the data as stringent enough for advanced quantitative analyses. This is, however, not a problem, but important to have in mind when reading the analyses. Thus, the analyses are made in an explorative mode in order to show what we think are probable patterns given the method used.

We have conducted two types of interviews: (1) in-depth interviews with key informants within the CSR field; (2) shorter interviews with representatives of companies and NGOs. The benefit of this is that we both get indications of macro and general patterns as well within nations as between, and more thick descriptions from a few cases of what type of challenges for sustainability work different types of organizations struggle with and how they do it. Combining the two data sets give us a richer material than if only the one or the other method would have been used. Another benefit with the shorter interviews where that it was easier to get relatively comparable general data from a number of cases in this way and that many different collaborators could contribute in data collection.

1.2.1. In-depth interviews with key informants

In total 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants within the field of CSR and sustainability. Four interviews were conducted in Belgium, four in Slovakia, and four in Sweden. The spread of these interviews from these countries gives interesting data for comparisons, where we have detailed information from organizations in the north, middle and east Europe. See Table 1 for information about the respondents per country.

Table 1. Information about respondents, in-depth interviews (n=12).

Country	Name	Title	Organization
Belgium	Reinhilde Switser	CSR Coordinator	Care
Belgium	Lammens Filip	Managing Director	Via Don Bosco
Belgium	Van de Sande Dimitri	Category Manager	Solucious
Belgium	De Force Lily	Director	Fairtrade Belgium
Slovakia	Anonymous	Sustainability Coordinator	Company
Slovakia	Anonymous	Communication Manager	Company
Slovakia	Anonymous	Senior Activity Coordinator	NGO
Slovakia	Anonymous	Head of Corporate Comm.	Company
Sweden	Svenne Junker	Expert	Naturskyddsföreningen
Sweden	Marianne Boogle	Operations Manager	CSR Sweden
Sweden	Lars Björklund	Vice president ethics	Skanska
Sweden	Inger Mattsson	CSR Manager	Scandic Hotels

1.2.3. Short interviews with representative of companies and NGOs

In total 71 shorter interviews were conducted with representatives from companies and from NGOs. The same spread of the interviews as in the in-depth interviews means that we cover organizations from different parts of Europe that are likely to work under different conditions and with different strategies. See Table 2 for more information about the respondents per country.

Table 2. Information about respondents, short interviews (n=71).

Country	Organization	Position
Italy	Attombri Venezia D.I.	Manager
Italy	MA. CE. SOC. COOP. SOCI. DI SOLIDARIETA	Director
Italy	Agenda 21 consulting srl	Engineer - production manager
	Fondazione Enzo E Silvio Chiari_Ente Morale	General secretary
Italy	Il Lievito Soc Coop Sociale	Vice president
Italy	Lega Coop Veneto	Regional Manager for Fishery
Italy	Societa Cooperativa Sociale Liberta Onlus	Human resource manager
Italy	Fonazione di religione opera S. Maria della Carita	Healthcare administration secretary
Italy	Veneto Region - Department of Education, Labour	Director of education and labour department and training director
Italy	Rio Tera dei Pensieri soc. Coop. Sociale	President
Italy	Il filo' Bdes Soc. Coop.	Shop director
Italy	Opere Riunite Buon Pastore	General director secretary
Italy	Amitie' srl	Director
Italy	Michele Autuori srl	Managing Director
Italy	Arpa friuli Venezia giulia	Regional Supervisor
Italy	S.P.A. Autovie Venete	Public funding coordinator
Italy	BANCA POPOLARE DI CIVIDALE	Marketing & comm manager
Italy	BANCA POPOLARE ETICA (POPULAR ETHICAL BANK)	CSR unit
Italy	Bottega de mondo	President
Italy	University of Trieste	Researcher Professor
Italy	SELEX ES SPA	Employee Quality Assurance
Italy	REGIONE AUTONOMA VAL D'AOSTA	Functionary
Italy	LEGACOOP FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA	Functionary
Belgium	Exchange vzw	Project coordinator
Belgium	Cicero	Owner
Belgium	Cotton Law office	Managing partner
Belgium	Sylva BVBA	CEO
Belgium	Volvo group Belgium	Senior project engineer

Belgium	Mejmo	CEO
Belgium	Door solutions	Owner
Belgium	Produmex	Managing partner
Belgium	Amoelon Mittel	Support Eng.
Belgium	BuildSofft	CEO
Belgium	Just Ice BVBA	Owner
Belgium	NYNAS NV	Head of Secondary distribution
Portugal	CESO	Vice-president
Portugal	Colep	Corporate internal communication and social responsibility coordinator
Portugal	Construcoes David Cunha Lda	Management
Portugal	Efacec	Sustainable Development Manager
Portugal	FORMATO VERDE	General Manager
Portugal	M.A.R. Kayaks Lda. (NELO)	Manager
Portugal	Bagabaga Studios	Vice-president
Portugal	FEC	Executive Director
Portugal	Fundacao Concalo da Silveira (FGS)	Executive Director
Portugal	Leigos para o Desenvolvimento	Executive Director
Portugal	Oikos - cooperacao e desenvolvimento	Development director
Portugal	Associacao Portal Solidario	President
Slovakia	CHEMOSVIT, a.s.	CSR Manager
Slovakia	PLOSKON AT, s.r.o.	Head of Marketing
Slovakia	REGADA, s.r.o.	Human resource manager
Slovakia	ELCOM	CFO
Slovakia	TOMARK, s.r.o.	Human resource manager
Slovakia	ZTS Sabinov, a.s.	Human resource manager
Slovakia	APEIRON, s.r.o.	Director
Slovakia	BWG k.s.	Director
Slovakia	RENOJAVA s.r.o.	Director
Slovakia	2J s.r.o.	Financial manager
Slovakia	Draka Comteq Slovakia s.r.o	Assistant of general manager
Slovakia	GOHR, s.r.o.	Department of Human resources
Hungry	STI Petőfi Nyomda Kft.	HR Specialist
Hungry	DS Smith Packaging Hungary Kft	Controlling manager
Hungry	Nagy és Tsa Kft.	HR specialist
Hungry	ProPack Hungary Kft	HR manager
Hungry	TransSystems Hungary Kft	Managing Director
Hungry	Kiss Cégsorozat Kft.	HR manager
Hungry	Csósz-Trans Kft	Controlling manager
Hungry	Szemerey és Tsa. Kft.	HR Specialist
Hungry	AbaújTej Kft.	HR manager
Hungry	ZS Pharma Hungary Kft	General manager
Hungry	Global Links Kft	Controlling manager
Hungry	Bodnár és Tsa Kft	General Manager

1.3. Structure of the report

The report is structured in order to show the richness of the data. We believe that it is important for further work in the program that all collaborators have a chance to take part of as much data as possible. In the program we have different types of collaborators that are engaged in different types of activities, all with different purposes in being involved and with an interest to develop their own core activities based on the outcome from the program. Therefore we have chosen not to narrow the research question too much and delimit the information presented as well as our analyses. Our ambition with the report is to draw a picture of what we have seen. Based on that all partners in the program then have a chance to draw bits and pieces out from the report that suits their purposes and interests. However, we also think that the picture is quite clear for the progress of the program, with the activities coming to which the research report is supposed to be an important input.

We structure the report as follows. (1) First we introduce the general picture of areas of sustainability work that tend to be of most importance. (2) Second, a similar picture of the ethical challenges at stake is presented. (3) Third, we discuss the general view of the ethical skills the organizations see a need for. (4) Fourth, we focus on the need for future knowledge in the area, and (5) fifth, we present the view of ethical training in the material. Finally we draw some general conclusions.

A number of appendixes is attached to the report where details from the gathered data are shown. This, we believe, is important to show variations and the richness of the data, some of which could be developed more in the coming versions of the report and some that can show information that different collaborators in the program can find interesting for various reasons and purposes related to their own activities.

2. Results

Even though there are plenty of activities and discussions going on about corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability today and increasingly many corporations understand these questions to be important and necessary to deal with, the field is characterized by fuzziness and ambiguity. Questions concerning the role and responsibility of corporations in society are complex and lack clear-cut answers. As seen in Figure 2.1 below the meaning varies from a strong emphasis on environmental challenges where saving energy is mentioned as the most important thing to do, scoring high both in the environmental and community building dimensions to more local social challenges such as supporting sponsoring local sports and culture engagement is seen as of less value in the long run. From an environmental point of view, supporting regional education structures is seen as important, since there is where the fundament for the future is built. Although it is mentioned that a CSR and sustainability mood has to be infused in the business model of every single organization, the

importance of community building of this type of activity, by implementing this mode in supply chains is less emphasized as an environmental rationale while it scores high in the community building dimension. Thus, the rationale behind the activity is to at first hand build awareness in a community, while activities rationalised from an environmental logic have a direct connection to immediate environmental results. Although there are some general trends in the material there also are regional variation in the dimensions of basing activities in the logics of having direct environmental effects or a more indirect logic of building long-term awareness and commitments through community building.

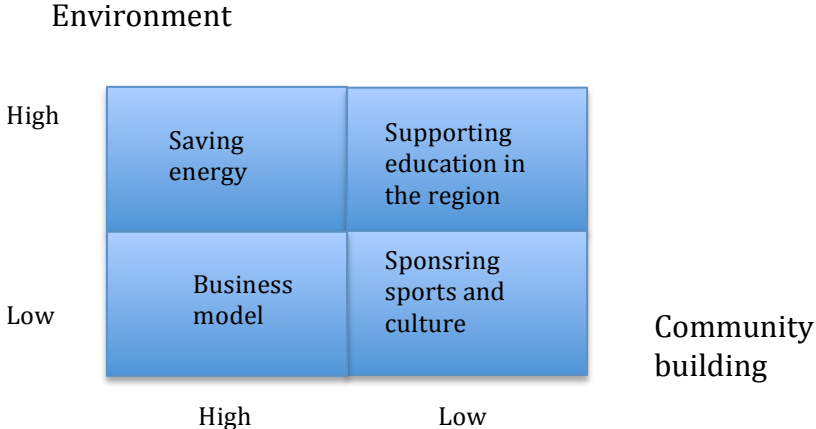


Figure 1. Variation in core activities

A detailed account for this is shown in the appendix (Table 2.1), but in short we can mention that it is quite common irrespective of from what part of Europe the respondents came from, that CSR is seen as a long-term engagement and that it should be infused in the local business model. It is also evident that the understanding of CSR as an add-on type of activity, like giving resources to charity, not is seen as the way forward. Even if it is the one or the other meaning that is emphasised, it is obvious that corporations as well in the north as the mid and east of Europe today constantly need to engage in activities that aim to define and clarify their responsibility towards the society.

Still, although some core dimensions are shared widely, as shown in table 2.2 (appendix) there is also a wide range of meanings put into the concept CSR or sustainability as is the preferred label in some countries. The in-depth interviews confirm the still rather vague character of the concepts used, and also indicate differences among the three countries, Belgium, Slovakia, and Sweden. In Sweden it is, for instance, more common among the respondents to use the term sustainability while CSR is not used so much today. CSR was a more fashionable concept about a decade ago. The opposite tendency is found in Belgium where CSR is the favoured concept. Slovakia, on the other hand, tend to use both concepts although a possible tendency is that CSR has been the dominating concept but that using sustainability is picking up.

We also see a general development over time where efforts towards sustainability and CSR earlier was seen as add on activities, such as producing CSR reports, missioning and yelling in the meaning of what is seen as bad behaviour is banned, as well as giving money to charity no longer are seen as the way forward. Today it is more common that organizations see CSR and sustainability efforts as something that need to be infused in the local business model.

In Table 3 below a variety of challenges the respondents see are listed. There are, however some differences in what challenges respondents from the different countries see that can be looked into in more detail in the appendix (Table 2.3 in appendix). In short, however, it seems as in Sweden the most important challenges is the engagement from the board and communication internally of what steps that are needed to take. The Belgian cases emphasise communication as well, but also bring up motivation among employees as an important issue. They also mark the importance of balancing profitability with sustainability and the lack of resources. The last dimension is emphasised by all respondents. A characteristic in the Slovakian case is that local organizations tend rely on the multinational and what they do. They seem to be the standard setters and it seems as local organizations have hard to live up to the same standard.

Table 3. Challenges

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation of employees • Make CSR a core for everyone • Communication • Priority – business meetings and profit always first • Other issues often favoured • No time for CSR • Make CSR a business case • Reaching top management • Profit is necessary for CSR work • Focus, you can't do everything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources • Develop sustainable supply chains • No substantial education on CSR • Jump up to the limit of your money • Simplify the message • You can't train ignorant people • Long-term planning • Collaboration with competitors • Integration of dimensions of CSR • Seeing the result • CSR people invisible today
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There is no priority or rating among the challenges listed in Table 3. The challenges listed here are randomly put in this order. It is likely that different organizations, depending on the industry they are in and the pressure from stakeholders and local governments of putting CSR and sustainability activities high, will have own priority lists among the challenges we have identified, but it is likely the ones listed in the figure are generally experienced. We believe that these challenges are general and issues most organizations in one way or another deal with. It is, for instance, likely that most organizations face challenges in motivating the employees to change the way they do things, or put some extra efforts in what they do for the sake of the environment. Making CSR and sustainability activities a top priority is definitely a challenge, especially when activities have to be handled in a business case logic. It is also general that the handling of CSR and sustainability issues is given limited extra resources in

modern organizations. Compared to, for instance, dimensions of results that are more easily measured, such as profitability, results in terms of CSR and sustainability are normally very long term and often shared with what other societal actors do. This makes these types of results, and the efforts made towards achieving them, hard see and the activities thereby more or less invisible.

Also concerning the needed skills and resources our data shows a variety (see Table 4 below). This list is, as in the case of Table 3 above, just a list without ranking a ranking logic. This is a list of needed skills and resources that are mentioned by our respondents. As can be seen in the figure, what the respondents mention in these dimensions varies quite a lot. Empathy, for instance, is a kind of skill they mean that the employees need to have. The same goes for attitude, interest, dedication, enthusiasm and awareness. Other skills, such as communication, leadership, teamwork, patience and feedback are more related to management skills. In terms of resources they emphasized structures for shared knowledge, models for measurements, clear missions of what should achieved, but also clarity in that the processes, if they should have considerable effect, need to be internally driven rather than being a pressure put on organization for governments or other external actors, such as NGOs.

Table 4. Needed Skills and Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Attitude • Interest • Dedication • Enthusiasm • Awareness • Communication • Leadership • Team work across organizational and national borders • Patience • Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback • Platforms for sharing knowledge and experience (they exist now but more integration and spread) • Clearness in missions • Output measurement • Distinctive tools on more specific aspects of sustainability • Internal instead of externally driven
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Although the skills and resources mentioned in the figure tend to be generally experienced, they also are likely to vary between regions and probably also between industries. We have, for instance, noted some differences between countries (Table 2.4 in the appendix for details) in these dimensions as well. The Swedish cases refer to the importance of standards for sustainability reports and CSR certifications while empathy and awareness in supply chains are mentioned by both Belgian and Slovakian organizations. Belgian and Slovakian respondents also refer to a lack of enthusiasm and need of leadership, but also technical support in order to make it easier to control the performance in CSR terms.

2.1. Areas of importance

The respondents (short interviews) were asked to rank eleven pre-defined areas of interest (the most important area to the least important, 1 = most important; 11(13) = least important) (see Table 1). They were also allowed to add two more areas of interest.

Labour, human rights and environment are at the absolute top of the list. Most of the respondents thus consider these three areas to be very important.

Table 5. Rankings – areas of interest

	AREAS OF INTEREST	RANK
1	Labour	3,9
2	Human Rights	4,4
3	Environment	4,5
4	Safety & Security	5,3
5	Non-discrimination	5,6
6	Children rights	6,6
7	Anti-corruption	6,7
8	Respect of natural resources	6,7
9	Supply chain management	7,1
10	Responsible marketing	7,5
11	Community work	7,8

In Table 5, the average ranking number is calculated per areas of interest (as lower the rank is as more important the interviewees consider it to be). It is important to note that if we only look at the areas of interest that has been ranked as the most important (number 1), the list would look different (see Table 6). *Human rights* would by far be the most important one and also *safety & security* would be considered as important as *environment*, tightly followed by *children rights*.

Each interviewee was also asked to explain shortly what he/she thinks that the area ranked as number one (most important) includes. The descriptions of the area *Labour* differed between companies and NGOs. Whereas companies mainly explain labour to include their own workers and the importance to create a long-term sustainable environment for their employees, the NGOs included issues such as creating possibilities for disadvantaged workers.

Table 6. The one most important area of interest, number of respondents

	AREAS OF INTEREST	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
1	Human rights	22
2	Labour	14
3	Safety & Security	7
4	Environment	7
5	Children rights	6
6	Responsible marketing	4
7	Supply chain management	3

The explanations of the area *Human Rights* were rather similar among companies and NGOs. Many emphasized that the area is broad and cover all the basic rights of human beings. One NGOs explains for example:

Human rights includes all issues related to the human beings, whatever their nationality, place of residence, religion, sex, colour, language or any other status. Human rights are directly related to equality, freedom, non-discrimination, inclusion. (Interview with NGO, Portugal)

Since the interviewees were only asked to explain what they included in the area of interest that they ranked as number one, the third area of interest on the ranking list, *environment*, only has a few explanations (it was only ranked as number 1 by seven of the total number of respondents, see Table 2). Whereas the NGOs emphasize awareness about environmental issues and the need of policy as well as cooperation, the companies explain the area more in terms of “producing for and with the environment”. One company explains:

Sustainable planning of transport infrastructures; environmental clean-up after accidental events; ‘carbon footprint’ (due to road transport and to operations management structures as for example Maintenance Centres, toll booths), environmental monitoring for noise pollution; renewable and alternative energy for the management and maintenance of road infrastructure. (Interview with company, Italy)

2.1.1. Areas already in focus – current work

In order to develop knowledge about the key challenges and educational needs among the respondents, it is valuable to understand the current conditions of the CSR work in terms of what areas are already in focus and what areas are subject for future projects. The respondents were thus asked to define what areas of interest (from the pre-defined list presented above)

they currently work with as well as what areas – if any – they think that they will have projects/activities in relation to in the future.

Key areas identified that the respondents (both companies and NGOs) state that they currently work with are Labour, environment, human rights and children rights. While companies tend to have more focus on labour and environment, the NGOs emphasise human as well as children rights. Two other areas that are significantly more often mentioned by companies in comparison with NGOs are supply chain management and safety and security. Contrary, NGOs tend to focus more on community work and non-discrimination.

About 55 per cent of the respondents state that there are areas at the pre-defined list that they currently do not work with but that they think they should have projects/activities in relation to (in the future). The same respondents (n=37) were also asked to specify what areas (from the pre-defined list) they would like to work with in the future (see Figure 2). Community work, environment, non-discrimination and responsible marketing were the four areas that were most recurrently mentioned.

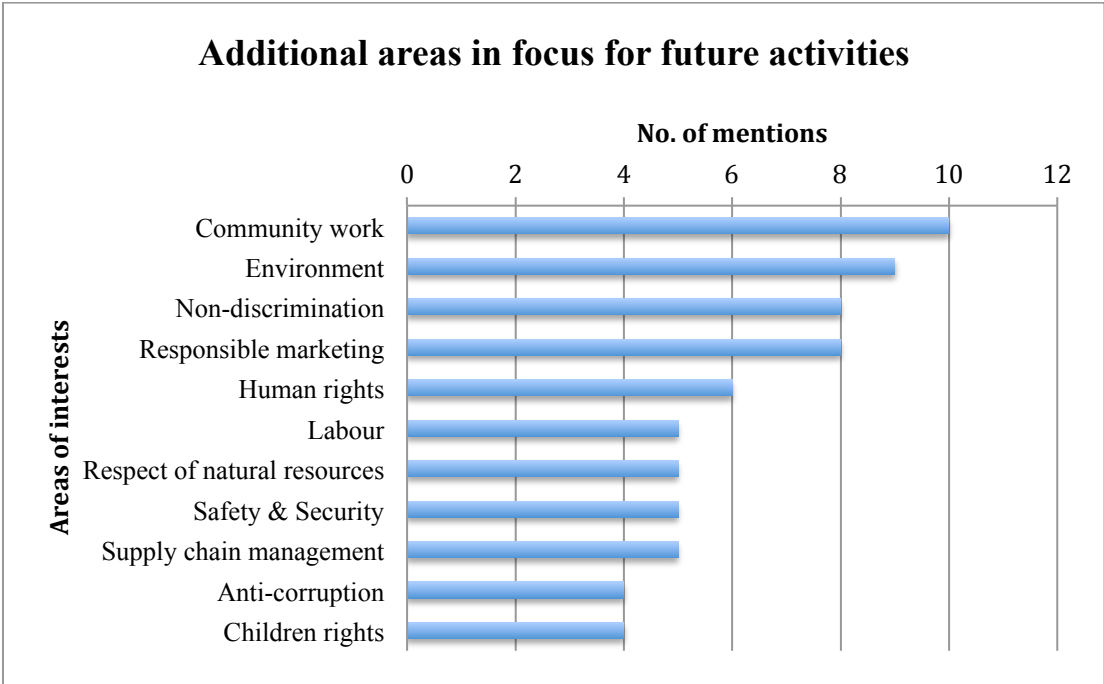


Figure 2. Number of mentions per areas that the respondents state that they do not work with currently but would like to do in the future (n=37).

2.2. Ethical challenges

The respondents were asked to – more generally – identify at least three key challenges that they face in their work with CSR/sustainability issues. The answers were fully open-ended. Below the results are divided into answers from companies and NGOs separately.

2.2.1. Companies – safety and security



Figure 3. Wordle picturing the key challenges that respondents from companies stated.

Key identified challenges for companies are issues concerning safety and security and environment (see Figure 3). Other key identified challenges concern CSR, supply-chain management, natural resources, equality, and labour as well as corruption and discrimination. These are the broad areas. Again, safety and security appears to be particularly important for companies and the corporate world. Interorganizational awareness concerns challenges with making employees, managers and other people internally within the organization understand the importance of social responsibility. Most often the respondents has a management position, for example managing director, human resource manager, or csr manager, and their answers witness that there appear to be a lack of understanding and awareness about CSR and sustainability issues within their own companies. Also outside of the company the interviewee answers witness a lack of understanding: Customers' responsibility concerns the challenge of making clients or customers understand that they can take responsibility through their shopping behaviour.

2.2.2. NGOs – stakeholder engagement



Figure 4. Wordle picturing the key challenges that respondents from NGOs stated.

In comparison to companies, the NGOs focus much more on various aspects of collaboration when their respondents are asked to define key ethical challenges (see Figure 4). Most commonly, the challenge is framed as stakeholder engagement emphasising the need of having many and various actors involved in the CSR and sustainability work. Also, public-private partnerships is frequently mentioned as another type of challenge concerning collaboration. Recurrently, the respondents more specifically also point out the importance of corporate involvement (or private sector engagement) – the companies are needed in the work but thus seen as a challenge to involve. Thus the voluntary sector seems to be eager to involve and include companies in the CSR work. However, the interview data does not support any equivalent engagement from companies to collaborate with NGOs.

In addition to the focus on stakeholder engagement, also the NGOs are mentioning broad, more general, areas of interests; some of which also appeared above in the answers from the companies: equality, respect of natural resources, human rights, civil rights and disadvantage workers.

2.3. Ethical skills that are needed

The ethical skills that the respondents mentioned can be categorized into three broad groups: (1) skills that have to do with a special type of attitude or mentality, such as for example to be open minded, honest and tolerant; (2) general knowledge and skills, mainly about how to manage and govern expectations within the area, for example communication skills and to know how to use new technology; and (3) specific knowledge and skills about CSR, such as regulation and policies about human rights, non-discrimination principles, and environmental

issues (see Table 7 for a detail presentation of all ethical skills mentioned). The group number one (attitude/mentality) and three (specific knowledge and skills) include skills mostly mentioned by the respondents, and thus can be understood to be most important types of skills. The ethical skills at the top of the lists are those mentioned most recurrently by the respondents. For example, to be open-minded (n=7) and to develop knowledge on CSR issues (n=6) were the two skills with more than five mentions each. Skills in relation to dedication, responsibility, environment, respect of natural resources, and standards and regulations all had five mentions each.

Table 7. Ethical skills mentioned by the respondents

Attitude/mentality	General knowledge/skills	"Specific" knowledge/skills
Open mind	Change management	Knowledge about CSR
Dedication	Skills to engage coworkers/managers	Environment
Responsibility	Stakeholder involvement	Respect of natural resources
Tolerance	Communication skills	Standards & regulation
Transparency	New technology/modern machinery	Human rights
Loyalty	Data/information analysis	Community work and relationships
Mutual trust in interspers. relationships	Business knowledge	Non-discrimination principles
Cooperation	Financial management	Safety & Security
Ability to listen	Goodwill	Labour
Honesty	Knowledge of strategic management	Sustainable innov. and dev.
Motivation	Long-term vision of corporate goals	Sustainability reporting
Personal awareness	Project design and management	Anti-corruption principles
Critical thinking	Risk management	Knowledge of legislation (e.g. Labour)
Flexibility	Social skills	Responsible marketing
		Supply chain management
		Ethics
		Charity
		Equality

2.4. Future knowledge – key areas of importance

The one single most important area of what kinds of knowledge/experience that the respondents (here companies) see as needed in the future in order to be able to participate in creating a positive development within the area is *education*. The respondents use a variety of terms in order to express this need of future knowledge within the area. The quote illustrates what terms the respondents have used in order to express the need of education:

courses about CSR; theoretical courses on CSR; theoretical training course; training, training in national accounting in different countries; invest in education; courses about environmental security and respect of natural

resources; roleplay; workshops; case study and visit on sites; social environmental issue knowledge.

Other important areas that the respondents mention are the environment, knowledge about other countries (cross-cultural experiences), management, stakeholder management, CSR management/tools/best practices, and regulatory/legal frameworks. For example, environmental issues are described as the following:

energy reduction; CO2 reduction; health safety and environment; to be aware that the natural sources are not here only for our generation (focusing on waste reduction, recycling, energy saving); environmental knowledge.

Knowledge about other countries also relates to the importance to learn *from* other countries as well as to develop processes and skills to transfer knowledge transnationally, e.g.:

Non-respect of human rights; knowledge of local national contexts; not respect for natural resources; knowledge of different cultures; intercultural transfer of experience; experience with transfer of know-how in CSR from foreign partners.

Less frequently mentioned, but still areas worth keeping in mind are:

- human resources
- new reporting standards
- project management
- sharing experiences
- finance

2.5. Ethical training

In order to be able to successfully design educational course packages, it is of importance to understand what the respondents see as future possible ways to secure competence and knowledge within the area. Of the total respondents, the type of organizations most suitable for providing training within the area is “in-house training” and the secondly most suitable is NGOs (see Figure 5).

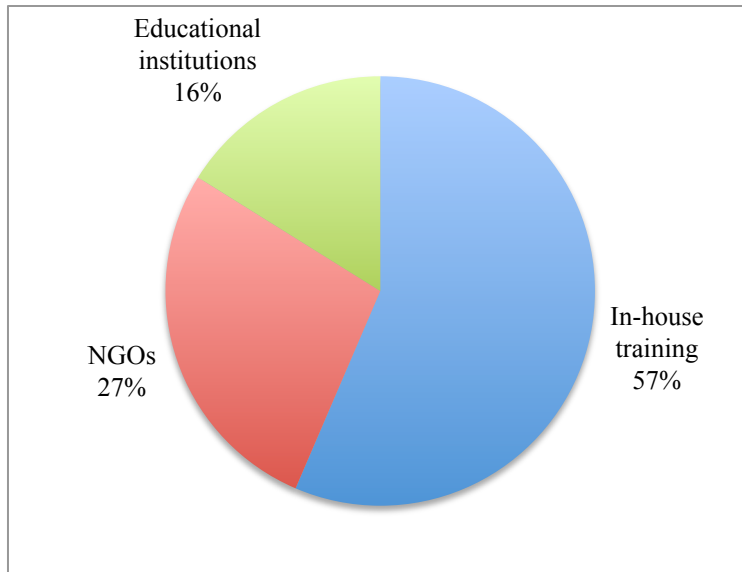


Figure 5. Distribution of what training institution is most suitable for providing education about CSR and sustainability issues in the future (number of respondents in percentage).

3. Conclusions

Given the fact that this study is exploratory with an intention to give a broad picture of the needs for ethical training to European based enterprises and NGOs this has implications for the design of the research, and thereby also for the conclusions possible to draw. Due to its exploratory character the study was designed in a qualitative mode, thus to start in an open mode and try to grasp how practitioners in enterprises and NGOs based in different European countries frame CSR and sustainability work as well as challenges and needed, skills, resources and training to develop more environmentally and socially ethical practices.

Based on a broad data our conclusions must be understood as general tendencies in Europe at large, with some indications of regional variations. The generality of the conclusions is verified by the fact that we have gathered data from a large number of enterprises and NGOs with very different missions and type of activities, from multinational construction firms to regional food retailers, and a number of different types of organizations in between these two extremes (see the list of respondents above). Due to the ambition of building a broad picture it has not been possible to interview more than one respondent in each organization. A backside of this is that it is hard to draw conclusions on single organizations and to make comparisons between industries. To gather reliable data in order to draw such conclusions requires more in-depth analyses of limited number cases stringent selected. Still, with the ambition of building a broad picture of the situation in Europe, the conclusions of the general tendencies we see in the data is reliable.

Based on the interview data, eight key areas of interest among the respondents are identified (Table 8).

Table 8. Key areas of interest

Human Rights (incl. children rights)
Labour
Environment (incl. respect of natural resources)
Safety & Security
Non-discrimination
Anti-corruption
Supply chain management
Responsible marketing

Even though it is not possible to conduct any exact or fully correct “ranking” among these areas of interest, the list can be interpreted as the areas mentioned at the top are more often mentioned and emphasized as key areas among the respondents and equivalent: the ones at the bottom of the list are less often mentioned. All the areas are rather broad in character, and thus cover several topics and areas of expertise – depending on type of organization and situation.

Based on the interview data, we have categorized the key ethical skills that the respondents state to be of importance (see Table 9). Most of these ethical skills are possible to match to each one of the areas of interest. Thus, the ethical skills are seldom area-/topic-specific other than when skills concerning specifically for example supply chain management or regulations concerning labour or corruption issues. It is thus possible to categorize the ethical skills identified in two broad categories: (1) area-specific skills and competences, and (2) general skills and competences needed independent on area.

Table 9. Key ethical skills and competences

Area-dependent skills	Area-independent skills
Rules, regulations, standards	Management skills
Facts and figures – general info.	The ability to motivate and make employees dedicated and loyal
Country/industry specifics	To be open-minded and tolerant
	Stakeholder involvement/management
	Communication skills
	New technology and data/information analysis
	Knowledge about social responsibility

The ethical skills make up training needs for the respondents and education is something that many of them emphasise as needed in order to fulfil their goals within the CSR and sustainability area in the future. The skills they emphasize reflect the overall development of CSR and sustainability work in contemporary organizations. Our data shows that today and for the future, it is necessary that CSR and sustainability dimensions are infused in single organization’s business models. Consequently, the need for ethical training is related to how

this can be realized in practice. It is clear that a majority of the respondents see that this need is likely to be best satisfied through in-house training. Moreover, the need for ethical training will not look the same in all types of organizations, in all industries or in all geographical regions. Some skills are, for instance, specific for particular corporations, such as skills related to know how of rules, regulations and standards. Other skills are, however, general for all kinds of corporations irrespective of what they do and where they are based, such as skills related to management, motivation, open-mindedness, stakeholder involvement, communication, information analysis and knowledge about sustainability. Still, although the need of these skills is general, it is likely that degree varies between organizations. Demand in ethical skills span over a broad field from very specific knowledge to very general knowledge about management and attitude/mentality. Thus, organizations are not likely to have exactly the same composition of training.

To conclude, the kind of ethical training our respondents demand is how the core areas of interest defined above can be infused into local business models. This includes skills such as attitudes and mentality, which means that future education should thus not only focus on “facts and figures” but need to include possibilities to reflect about ethical dilemmas and questions.

When developing training needs and in order to set up course packages it is important to be sensitive to types of organization. Our conclusions presented here are general in character and must be understood as summarizing the many various types of business as well as NGOs included in the interview study. Some areas of interest will obviously be more important for some organizations than for others – depending on for example size, national context, industry, and historical experiences within the field of CSR and sustainability. Thus, the definitions of the mission of a particular organization in terms of CSR and sustainability must be related to what kind of actions they are involved in and the context where they operate. For example, companies emphasise in general intraorganizational issues and the local community, whereas NGOs tend to focus on human (civil, children) rights, non-discrimination. Also, NGOs emphasise stakeholder engagement and public-private partnerships, i.e. the need to involve actors from various social spheres and cooperate within the field of CSR, whereas the willingness and need to cooperate across social sectors are not as visible in the answers from the corporate respondents. Therefore, and in line with what many of the respondents also suggest in the interviews, education and training program in the area would gain from being practical and case-based.

Appendixes

Table 2.1. CSR – a concept with a variety of meanings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving energy • Reduce paper use • Reduce waste • Reduce eco footprints • Recycling materials • Human rights • Labour conditions • Safety at work • Training • Charity • Empathy • Non-discrimination • Business model • Philantropy • Vision • Intergrated, not add on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for environment, natural resources and people • Sustainability • Saving the planet • Giving back to the region • Community building • Supporting education • Balancing finances, environment and social issues • Reporting • Training future generations • A self-regulating tool • A long-term process • Multi-dimensional value creation • Compliance: business, environment, people-communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tool for reaching sustainability • Transparency • Learning from each other • An inclusive work place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – From schools to work and the future society • Ambiguous concept • Replaced by more narrow concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sustainability – Responsibility – Security – Compliance – Green – Ethics – Diversity – Community buildnig – Social responsibility
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Table 2.2. What is CSR? A comparison between countries

	Belgium	Slovakia	Sweden
What is CSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cleaning at daytime – Dimming and computers off at night • Reduce the use of papers • Reduce waste • Human and children rights • Labour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Working conditions – Human capital – Happy employees – happy customers – Delighted customers stay • Safety at work • Training of employees • A platform for charity • Empathy • Non-discrimination • A way of doing business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bad suppliers, although cheap, will not be preferred • Donations, philanthropy • Eco-efficiency • A vision of where to be in 3 years • Bottom up process • Entrepreneurship • Something you are involved in, but not right now • A core value, not a separate goal • Trade in respectful ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – For environment – Natural resources – poverty • Recycling • Sustainability as marketing • Fundraising opportunities for NGOs • Reduction of ecological and digital footprints • Positive impact on society as a whole, at home and abroad • Saving people and the planet • Capacity building and awareness • Giving people means to take care of themselves and their families build a better society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multinationals giving back to regions in order to stabilize their position • Education and to promote education • Cooperation about ethical principles • The use of electricity, water, materials • Efficiency • Finding balance between environment, social and financial issues • Sustainability • Focus on production, recycling • Reporting • How you do business • Not an add on • Integrated way of how to think • Community building • Interaction with community • Giving back to region • Supplement to lacks in the education system in the region • Donations • Scholarships to students and programs • Ethical and fair procurement • Help to disabled (def people) • The spirit of the firm • What people really do • Influence the region • The dna of doing business • Support local community in culture, health, sports • Education for energy saving • Training future generations • Strategies for CSR in troubled times • Competition between three categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Those who not bother – Those who say they do – Those who say and do! 	Hittade ingen data i min ofullständiga version av presentationen

Table 2.3 Challenges – a comparison between countries

	Belgium	Slovakia	Sweden
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation of all employees • Communication - Hard to reach all employees at the same time in the correct way • Business meetings always prioritized • Need to do better than required by law • Interest for seeing the bigger picture • Regular information of the need of CSR • No time for CSR – but it is not a separate activity • CSR as defensiv strategy • To make CSR a business case • How companes position themselves in the world • Trouble reaching top management • Profit is needed for doing CSR but is not priority • Constant need to balance sustainabilty with profitability • Pick certified suppliers • Installing sustainability among suppliers • Hard for NGOs to live up to their image – they have to leave footprints in order to spread the word • You can't help everyone • Limited resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the whole eco-system from schools to managers • Multinationals know much more than local SMEs • Establishing local platforms to meet and create new ideas and activities • Develop supply chains, where procurement department is curcial • Help to set goals and keep departments and people on track • We are followers, not business leaders in Europé – also goes for CSR • Old companies tend to be unaware of CSR • To be able to motivate all involved when finances and HR are lacking and the results are not world famous • All want something different • No university or entity to turn to, have to prepare on your own • Hard to find information is slovak language • Engagement from top management who have much on their agenda • Going in depth at blue-collar levels • Focus on one area for making a big bang • Scratch on everything, doing to much with to little effect • Picking the right fields to go in depth • "you can only jump up to the limit of the money in your pocket" • Profits means that you can do more • Who should you give to? • Simple message • If you want to burn other, you have to be on fire • Top managers as role models • In troubled times people have to go – hard to prioritize CSR then • You can't train ignorant people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate what its needed • Other issues often favoured • Implementing GRI • Lng time perspective 50 years • Participation, engaged and involved employees • Information to everyone about • Doing more of everything • Little engagement from the board and top management – they should be role-models and take the lead • Seeing the risks means change • Sustainability as a business model • Svanen – Criterias to which everyone can contreIBUTE

Table 2.4 Needed skills and resources – a comparison between countries

	Belgium	Slovakia	Sweden
Needed skills and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Attitude • Interest • Dedication to help • Enthusiasm • Awareness of that the need does not end at the border • Computers an programs for logistics • Supply chain management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply chain management • Control about, e.g. waste separation • Communication • Leadership • Team work • More time • Patiens • Do things by heart • Resilience as a mantra for people • Tons of things but lack of resourses • Dialog – not yelling to employees • Transparency • Follow ups of that you do what you say • Flexibility • Critical thinkgin among employees • Empathy • Feedback • Emotional attachment • Platforms for organizations to exchange experience, finding partners • Clearness in what you want to achieve • Meetings for everyone (facilities) • Not personal skills but engagement and willingness • Learn from colleagues who are doing good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts not projects • Environmental certificates (Svanen) • Awareness of ethical management at the top level • Knowledge about GRI • Time

	Belgium	Slovakia	Sweden
Needed skills and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Attitude • Interest • Dedication to help • Enthusiasm • Awareness of that the need does not end at the border • Computers an programs for logistics • Supply chain management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply chain management • Control about, e.g. waste separation • Communication • Leadership • Team work • More time • Patiens • Do things by heart • Resilience as a mantra for people • Tons of things but lack of resourses • Dialog – not yelling to employees • Transparencyy • Follow ups of that you do what you say • Flexibility • Critical thinkgin among employees • Empathy • Feedback • Emotional attachment • Platforms for organizations to exchange experience, finding partners • Clearness in what you want to achieve • Meetings for everyone (facilities) • Not personal skills but engagement and willingness • Learn from colleagues who are doing good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts not projects • Environmental certificates (Svanen) • Awareness of ethical management at the top level • Knowledge about GRI • Time