

External CSR Communication in a Strategic Approach

Diana Corina GLIGOR-CIMPOIERU¹

Valentin Partenie MUNTEANU²

ABSTRACT

As part of a strategic approach, aimed at assuring mutual benefits for the social cause and the business organization, a good CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility communication is vital for the success of a CSR program. We argue that there is not a problem with the legitimacy of the CSR concept, but rather to its implementation. If a business organization implementing socially responsible initiatives is focusing only on reaping the image benefits from a simple public relations perspective, then it loses all the potential business benefits it could gain from a strategic approach focused on long term real results in a win-win perspective. The fact that the image benefit is one of the most important incentives that a business organization could obtain for engaging in CSR activities cannot be ignored, and that is the reason why we have chosen to analyse the topic of CSR communication, mainly external communication, as an important link in the process of implementing a CSR program, that plays an important part for the success of a CSR program. The approach on CSR communication should definitely be a strategic one, and long already common forms of external CSR communication like web pages or CSR annual reports new means of social media networks have an increasing importance. For the practical part of the paper, we were interested in analyzing how much of the external CSR communication in the Romanian business environment is oriented toward a traditional or a strategic approach.

KEYWORDS: *corporate social responsibility, CSR traditional approach CSR, CSR strategic approach, CSR communication, channels of communication*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *L14, M14.*

INTRODUCTION

When referring to the issue of corporate social responsibility very often the notion of change is brought into discussion, thus corporate social responsibility is seen as a response to changes produces either in the external environment in which business operates or as a result of change of various internal factors, but also as a response to a change of paradigm regarding the role that business play in society and the way the business world has an impact on people's lives or the natural environment. Ghalib, A. K., and Agupusi (2011) are estimating that in the past decade we have "*witnessed an unprecedented growth in the corporate world, bringing about dramatic changes to the way people live, the way societies and entire economies operate and interact, and the manner by which ecosystems and the environment function owing to rapid industrialization*". In this context it is more than

¹ West University of Timișoara, România, diana.gligor@e-uvt.ro

² West University of Timișoara, România, valentin.munteanu@e-uvt.ro

obvious that business organizations can no longer ignore the concept and are driven more and more into taking it in consideration and putting it into action.

But putting the concept of corporate social responsibility into action faces an important challenge due to the lack of a commonly accepted definition and understanding of the concept. It is intriguing from our point of view that although there have been over six decades since Howard R. Bowen (1953) first mentioned the concept in the modern literature but also over four decades since Milton Friedman (1970) talked about “*the use of the cloak of social responsibility*” and it’s potential to be a “*window-dressing*” and hundreds if not thousands of academic researches on the topic and practical initiatives specialists in the field of corporate social responsibility are still arguing about the actual meaning of the concept and its implications for the way business are shaped.

Trough this article we are arguing that the issue relating to the topic of corporate social responsibility and its acceptance is not in the essence of the concept, that is easily and widely accepted from our perspective, but mainly in the lack of a strategic approach versus a traditional approach. With this work we explain the difference between the two approaches emphasizing the importance that CSR communication plays in process of implementing corporate social responsibility in a strategic approach. The importance of the topic is significant, giving the fact that “while there is a huge literature on CSR, the literature on CSR communication is disproportionate in size, with relatively little cross-disciplinary research on the topic” (Øyvind, Bartlett and May, 2011).

1. THE MEANING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRATEGIC APPROACH OF CSR

Starting with Howard R. Bowen that first mentioned in 1953 the notion of responsibilities of a businessman, the concept of *Corporate Social Responsibility* – CSR has captured the interest of both academics and business practitioners. And Bowen was not the only researcher interested in the topic in the ’50, Peter Druker for instance in his 1954 work called “*The practice of management*” was also acknowledging the importance of social responsibility.

In the ’60, Keith Davis was arguing that social responsibility had the potential of bringing long term benefits and in the ’70 Harold Johnson considered that the managers of a responsible business organization put in balance a *multiplicity of interests* when making a decision and they are not just “*striving only for larger profits for its stockholders, a responsible enterprise also takes into account employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities, and the nation*” (Johnson, 1971). The same year, George Steiner stated that although “*business is and must remain fundamentally an economic institution*” (Steiner, 1971) there are responsibilities toward the society, connected to the size of the business organization (the bigger its size, the bigger the responsibilities). This marks from our perspective the beginning of the acknowledgment that through social responsibility initiatives business organizations must take into account various entities with an impact on the activity of the organization, the so called *stakeholders* of a business organization.

In 1975, Preston and Post were discussing about the fact that social responsibility at that time was consisting of a “*large number of different, and not always consistent, usages*” and referred to it as “*only to a vague and highly generalized sense of social concern that appears to underlie a wide variety of ad hoc managerial policies and practices*”. Even more, the authors mentioned the fact that these kind of social initiatives were lacking *any*

coherent relation to the managerial unit's internal activities or to the host environment (Preston and Post, 1975). All this mentioned aspects related to social responsibility in the '70 underline from our point of view the lack of a strategic approach and marked a call for correlation of the implemented social initiatives with the core activity of the business organization and other business units. They also marked the fact that too many initiatives were supported and that is seemed that they were randomly chosen through *ad hoc managerial policies and practices*.

The need for the involvement of stakeholders in implementing social initiatives was marked in 1986, by an article called "*Strategic Management of the Socially Responsible Firm: Integrating Management and Marketing Theory*" written by Murray and Montanary that underlined that "*although management scholars recognize that corporate social responsibility has strategic implications for the firm, few have focused on the interdependent and dynamic relationships among the firm and the relevant actors in its social environment*" (Murray & Montanary, 1986). Murray and Montanary expressed also the need for developing "*a theoretical framework for management to use for planning, implementing, and controlling social responsibility activities*" thus underling from our point of view the need for a well articulated plan in implementing corporate social responsibility programs.

Later on, the fact that economic and social objectives were so long perceived as being distinct and opposite for business organizations was representing a *false dichotomy* according (Porter and Kramer, 2002). Even more, the authors stated that in a long term approach "*social and economic goals are not inherently conflicting, but integrally connected*". In their paper called "*The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy*" they stated that a strategic approach of philanthropic initiatives is reached when there is a convergence of interests between the social benefits and the economic benefits.

From a strategic point of view of social responsibility, it is obvious that the business organization should take in consideration long term objectives. The long term value creation is not only related to economic value, but concerns value creation in three dimensions which is called *the Triple P bottom line* that includes *Profit – the economic dimension, People – the social dimension, Planet – the ecological dimension* (Graafland et al., 2004).

In 2005 Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee were launching a landmark book for CSR entitled "*Corporate Social Responsibility: doing the most good for your company and your cause*". We appreciate their contribution as being significant, especially from a practical perspective because they manage to describe in very down-to-earth approach which are the main types of CSR programs that a business organization could implement: *Corporate Cause Promotions, Cause-Related Marketing, Corporate Social Marketing, Corporate Philanthropy, Community Volunteering and Socially Responsible Business Practices*. At the same time they also had an important theoretical contribution for the importance of a strategic approach in implementing a CSR initiative. Thus they pointed out some of the characteristics of a strategic approach, versus a traditional one (concentrated almost exclusively on philanthropy). In Table 1 those characteristics pointed out by Kotler and Lee are systemized by Gligor-Cimpoieru and Munteanu (2013):

Table 1. The differences between a traditional and a strategic approach according to Kotler and Lee (2005), in our synthesis

The Traditional Approach	The New Approach
The social objectives and the business objectives were seen as being separate	The objectives of doing well (for the benefit of local communities or other stakeholders) and doing good (the business organization) are seen as interconnected.
Business chose social causes to support as far away as possible from their business activity for not raising suspicions about their egoistic motivations	Business organizations could also benefit from implementing a CSR program
There was no connection between the business strategy and the social activities	It is important to integrate CSR activities and principles into the strategy of an organization
CSR activities were perceived as an obligation	CSR activities as part of the business organization's strategy and fit with values
Decisions regarding the choice of a social issue to be made due to the increasing pressure of "doing good to look good"	Decisions regarding the choice of a social issue to be supported were made on the principle of "doing well and doing good"
The rule was "do good as easily as possible, resulting in a tendency to simply write a check"	The rule in developing and implementing a CSR program is "doing all we can to do the most good, and not just some good"
Companies had a fixed budget for social activities	The business organizations allocate resources according to the specific needs and don't limit their input just to money
Funds were allocated to as many organizations as possible, based on the perception that the visibility of the initiatives should be increased	Few causes are supported so that the impact is significant
Usually the donors were just one of many sponsors	The social involvement is important for building brand identity
Companies supported a variety of organizations and social issues through the years	Companies support few causes, and they create partnerships with external partners (stakeholders)
Commitments were mostly for a short term	Long term commitments
There was a tendency to avoid issues associated with core business products	Business organizations chose to support social issues connected with their business activity
The decisions regarding the social issues to be supported were heavily influenced by senior management and the board of directors	The decision regarding the social issues to be supported are made with the support of various groups like employees or customers
There were few attempts to coordinate giving programs with other corporate strategies and business units	CSR programs are coordinated with business strategies for other units like marketing or human resources departments
For the evaluation part, "the approach was simply to trust that the good happened" and little was done to establish quantifiable outcomes	Trusting is no longer enough, evaluation becomes critical

Source: Gligor-Cimpoieru and Munteanu (2013)

We find arguments for the importance and the need for a strategic approach on CSR even on the critics brought to the concept. For instance in 2005, at least apparently as a replica to Kotler and Lee's 2005 work, Deborah Doane published in Stanford Social Innovation Review an article entitled "*The Myth of CSR. The problem with assuming that companies can do well while also doing good is that markets don't really work that way*", in which she sees CSR as an attempt to show "*the friendly face of capitalism*" to a "*generation that felt that big business had taken over the world, to the detriment of people and the environment*" (Doane, 2005) after fierce criticism regarding corporate behaviours like the Shell's 1996 oil

spit in the North Sea or Nike's "sweatshop labour" and as "a way of partnering with the enemy". Doane acknowledges the rise of the CSR movement "from a fringe activity by a few earnest companies" to "a highly visible priority for traditional corporate leaders", the fact that CSR reports "are now commonplace in the media" that socially responsible investment has become more popular (a fact proven by the introduction of the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good), that "socially linked brands, such as Fair Trade, are growing very quickly", that "the unprecedented growth of CSR may lead some to feel a sense of optimism about the power of market mechanism to deliver social and environmental change", that "there are some strong business incentives that have either pushed or pulled companies" toward CSR and that CSR initiatives "may provoke changes in basic practices" but she concludes that CSR "is a placebo", "lulling us into a false sense of security" and that legislative measures are needed in order to regulate business behaviour. All this argumentation brought attention from our point of view the importance of properly using and communicating CSR initiatives.

In 2006, Porter and Kramer published another article about the social involvement in which they analyzed the link between the competitive advantages of a company and its social responsibility stating even from the beginning that "the prevailing approaches to social responsibility are so fragmented and so disconnected from the business and strategy" that "they obscure many of the greatest opportunities" (Porter and Kramer, 2006) and that by treating their social initiatives as they treat their core business choices business organizations could gain competitive advantages. In their view, the economic success and the social wealth are no longer seen as a zero-sum game.

Ghalib, A. K., and Agupusi (2011) are also talking about strategic corporate social responsibility (for which they use the acronym SCSR) "as a tactical contrivance devised to make business decisions in the corporate world".

In the Perez-Batres *et al.* approach (2012) we could notice a debate between those who use CSR initiatives only as a way for misleading stakeholders with their social and environmental achievements in order to misguide attention from severe problems (actions called *greenwashing*) considered to represent "symbolic" initiatives of CSR from those initiatives truly committed, called "substantive" initiatives, another argument from our perspective for a strategic approach on CSR.

In 2014 Tehemar sees CSR as "a management philosophy" that "has received considerable attention and became an accepted trend that many companies are trying to incorporate within their core business" but at the same time "as any management concept it has to be well planned and communicated in order to achieve its optimum results".

2. THE ROLE OF CSR COMMUNICATION IN A STRATEGIC APPROACH

In a traditional approach managers are reticent on communicating the CSR initiatives and their results, both inside and outside the business organization, but in a strategic approach where a win-win situation is desired, the communication part of the CSR is very important as part of the success of the initiative because it assures mutual benefits for the social cause and the business organization. On the other side, from a strategic approach of CSR initiatives, the image benefit is not the most important benefit created, or the ultimate benefit, is it just an additional benefit after reaching other important benefits like improving the competitive capabilities of the business organization or its relationships with the stakeholders. In this case, facts should be more important than words. Otherwise, even a

very good communication plan will not be enough to sustain the objectives and the results of the CSR program, its authenticity and credibility in the perception of different stakeholders like the media or the local communities for instance (Gligor-Cimpoieru, 2012).

For the success of a CSR program, especially in a strategic approach of implementation, communication plays an important part and managers must be aware of the fact that "what companies think they are saying may be quite different from what stakeholders are seeing and hearing" (Bhattacharya and all, 2011) and in our opinion is quite vital to identify this existing gap between the perception that managers have on a CSR program and how the targeted public actually perceive it. The fact that "most stakeholders are not passive receivers of CR information" (Bhattacharya and all, 2011) from our point of view signifies that, like in any other case, perceptions of different individuals on certain topics are subjective, being influenced by aspects like previous experience or personal values.

There are two directions for communicating CSR initiatives, internal and external communication, both important due to the fact that the image of a business organization is built also through its employees. Our focus with this paper is on external CSR communication as it is more visible and tangible for the general public and a variety of business organization stakeholders.

In the eight steps circular model proposed for implementing CSR programs in a strategic approach (Gligor-Cimpoieru, 2012), represented in Figure 1, we can notice that on vital step in having a strategic approach is to design an internal and external communication plan.

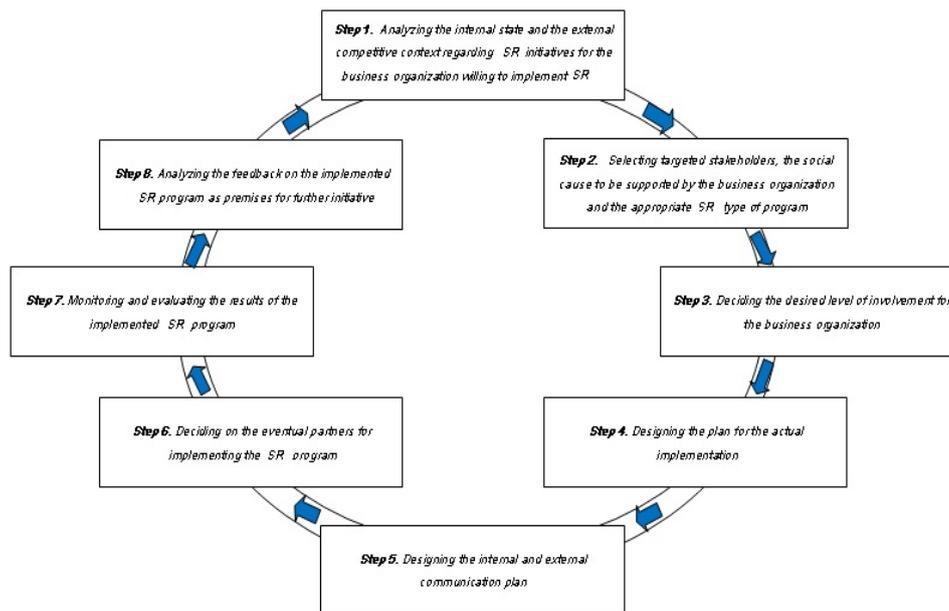


Figure 1. The proposed Model for implementing a SR program from a strategic approach

Source: Gligor – Cimpoieru (2012, p. 278)

CSR communication, especially the external one, becomes increasingly important in a business environment like the business organization operate nowadays, characterized like less stable, less predictable and with various categories of stakeholders with high expectations and an increasing need for transparency.

3. CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AND MEANS OF EVALUATION FOR EXTERNAL CSR COMMUNICATION

There are several elements that ensure a successful CSR communication. Tehemar (2011) identifies several requirements for a successful communication framework:

- Leadership commitment;
- Existence of culture of transparency;
- Presence of an organization strategy with clear CSR objectives and goals;
- Presence of solid organizational structure hierarchy;
- Presence of organizational committees structure with clear reporting mechanisms;
- Clear understanding of community's culture;
- Proper identification and mapping of stakeholders, focused on each sector's interest;
- Presence of an active Total Quality Management department;
- Well-established data management process;
- Proper differentiation between Public Relations activities and CSR.

From our perspective one of the important elements that ensure the success of a CSR communication campaign is choosing the right channel of communication. Companies use several channels for their external CSR communication, among which having a web page with a link for the main site of the company and published annuals reports are in our opinion some of the most popular or more commonly used ones. Bhattacharya and all (2011), Tehemar (2014) present several channels for external CSR communication and we have systemized the ones we considered the most representative, especially for the particularities of our business environment, as it follows: dedicated web pages, CSR Annual reports (in the form of specific CSR reports or as part of the general reports), media reports, campaigns on products and packaging, television advertisement, promotions, partnerships with mass-media representatives (like sponsorship of a TV program oriented on a social cause), blogs, e-mails to interested stakeholders (like employees, via intranet), use of Social Media Networks (like Facebook or Twitter). The use of all this channels of communication identified in the bibliographical study will represent for us indicators of the level of involvement in CSR communication for the analyzed business organizations.

It is important to choose the right channel of communication, appropriate to the social cause, the profile of the business organizations and the targeted stakeholders in order to maximize the benefits of the CSR implemented program.

Using a web page has the advantage of offering information in an easily accessible way to a variety of stakeholders and for the business organization can bring a significant boost of image. Although very popular as a mean of external CSR communication, annual reports may not always be the best solution for a business organization, especially if it aims at gaining the benefits from a CSR strategic approach. Bhattacharya and all (2011) underline the fact that *“relatively small number of people actually read”* annual reports and that *“stakeholders increasingly want a deeper and ongoing dialogue that that afforded by detailed annual reports”*. We could add that, from our experience in analyzing CSR annual

reports, sometimes annual reports are used to barely hide with statistics serious issues that a company is facing. That is the reason why we consider that additional forms and channels of CSR external communication are needed, although they could involve significantly larger resources of the business organization. Following the trends as the main promoting strategies of the business organization, new on-line promoting environments like the social media networks become increasingly important.

Based on the theoretical background analyzed so far we propose a methodology for the evaluation of level of involvement in external CSR communication for a business organization presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Evaluation of external CSR communication

No. crt.	Criteria	Meet	Not meet
1.	Management declarations to suggest CSR engagement		
2.	Specific CSR annual report		
3.	CSR sections in the general annual report		
4.	Dedicated web pages to the CSR activities		
5.	The CSR web page is visible on the main page of the company		
6.	CSR media reports		
7.	CSR campaigns on products and packaging		
8.	CSR television advertisement		
9.	CSR related promotions		
10.	CSR related partnerships with mass-media representatives		
11.	CSR blogs		
12.	CSR e-mails to interested stakeholders		
13.	Use of Social Media Networks to promote CSR activities		

Source: Author's own processing

4. CSR COMMUNICATION IN ROMANIA. CASE STUDY: EXTERNAL CSR COMMUNICATION AT PETROM

Little data is available on empirical studies conducted in Romania related to CSR, and even less is focused on CSR communication. But the few evidence that we found come to support our perspective of the lack of a strategic approach in CSR communication in Romanian business organizations. For instance, Oancea and Diaconu (2010) present the results of an empirical research conducted, which included Romanian business representatives involved in CSR activities. The authors present the need for a strategy in the field of CSR in Romanian business organization and acknowledge the fact that most of the financial resources allocated in this field go toward organizational philanthropy. Related to CSR communication we could notice several figures in their results like: 61% of the respondents argue that their companies do not publish social reports are not subject to a social audit and only 24% that their companies meet this criterion. Interestingly, although they are involved in the CSR field, the rest of the respondent declared that they do not know these facts about their companies. Another aspect that caught our attention was that although 37% of the respondents declared that their companies publish social reports, in fact those companies do not publish this kind of reports according to Oancea and Diaconu later research. From the respondents, 16,7% declared that they did not hear about Romanian companies publishing social reports, 11% state that social reports are not credible and

53,7% declared that they consider social reports credible. The interviewed business representatives consider that the main issues that a social audit should take in consideration are relationships with local communities (77,8%), employees rights and working conditions (74%), consumers (66,7%) and the natural environment (66,7%).

Iamandi (2012) conducted an empirical analysis on CSR communication in Romania taking in consideration five criteria (i. the existence of a dedicated CSR section on the official website of the company; ii. the existence of CSR reports or dedicated CSR sections in the corporate financial or annual reports on the official website of the company; iii. the corporate registration or presentation of CSR case studies of the company on three Romanian CSR specialized websites; iv. the existence of partial or consolidated CSR funds on official websites or personally communicated to the author in response to a dedicated CSR survey aimed at measuring the involvement in CSR issues of the Romanian companies during 2007-2011 period; v. the corporate willingness to answer to a previously mentioned CSR questionnaire). Her findings suggest that out of 160 companies included in her panel 100 had a dedicated CSR site and 82 a CSR report, but to the fact that the option for the companies to be included on the panel was already influenced by prior CSR activity in some cases, we consider that the results are not representative for the majority of business organizations in Romania.

Due to the challenges and the complexity of conducting a representative study for the CSR activity in Romania, we focused on finding a reference point for CSR communication benchmarking in Romania and we found the Petrom Company to be this reference point for other Romanian business organization in their quest of communicating CSR.

For years Petrom is the most profitable company in Romania so if we take in consideration the legitimacy argument we could argue that Petrom should allocate visible resources in CSR related activities.

Our case study is focused on analyzing Petrom according to the criteria presented in Table 2, based on the studied bibliography. The results of our analysis are presented in Table 3. below:

Table 3. Evaluation of Petrom’s external CSR communication

Nr. crt.	Criteria	Meet/Not Meet	Details/Examples
1.	Management declarations to suggest CSR engagement	√	Multiple CSR related declarations done by Mariana Gheorghe CEO Petrom (see for instance www.csrmedia.ro)
2.	Specific CSR annual report	√	Published every year since 2007
3.	CSR sections in the general annual report	√	CSR specific sections are to be found in Petrom annual reports, but also additional CSR related content is to be found in the reports
4.	Dedicated web pages to the CSR activities	√	For instance: http://www.petrom.com/portal/01/petromcom/petromcom/Petrom/Sustainability
5.	The CSR web page is visible on the main page of the company	√	Multiple and very visible statements are related to Petrom CSR involvement. The CSR project “Tara lui Andrei” is very visible with a dedicated section on the main web page
6.	CSR media reports	√	On Petrom site we can find an archive of CSR

Nr. crt.	Criteria	Meet/Not Meet	Details/Examples
			press releases since 2008, thus proving a constant commitment in communicating their CSR activity to the media
7.	CSR campaigns on products and packaging	√	The product collection "Romanian successes" (Reusite romanesti)
8.	CSR television advertisement	√	The CSR project "Tara lui Andrei" was promoted through television advertisement
9.	CSR related promotions	√	For instance, Petrom promoted specific local food products in their shops, emphasizing the importance of supporting local economies in small communities
10.	CSR related partnerships with mass-media representatives	√	Petrom supports the TV show "Biziday" by Moise Guran on national television
11.	CSR blogs	√	For instance the blog for "Tara lui Andrei" project http://www.taraluiandrei.ro/blog
12.	CSR e-mails to interested stakeholders	√	Any stakeholder can make a solicitation for an e-mail with additional information
13.	Use of Social Media Networks to promote CSR activities	√	On their Facebook page, the company's CSR involvement holds an important share of the published content. The company is present also on LinkedIn, Youtube, Twitter, etc.

Source: Author's own processing

As noticed, Petrom meets all our defined criteria for an effective CSR communication, thus supporting our perspective of them being a benchmark for CSR communication for other Romanian business organizations.

Two of the previously analyzed criteria will be further detailed, both essentially defining the CSR external communication's strategic features and quality: specific CSR annual report and dedicated web pages to the CSR activities. The analysis will be focused on the availability, structure, relevance and informational content.

I. Specific CSR annual report. Each year, OMV Petrom provides for all stakeholders (since 2007) Annual Report of involvement in the community, under the motto "Everyone creates the wellbeing". Presented in an interactive approach, with specific submenus, the report includes a quantitative part, with reports and statistics, and a descriptive one. The first part of the report presents the major results, and the second one describes the main projects' activities in the major area in which the company has been involved: education, community's development, environment, health, employee's engagement, NGOs support. In Table 4 are shown, in a dynamic comparison for 2012 and 2013, the main results for the last two years and the total value of projects (EURO) and detailed by areas:

Table 4. The main domain of the OMV Petrom involvement

Domain	2012	2013
Education	713.000	971.386
Community's development	179.300	2.499.386
Environment	108.200	90.800
Health	1.562.700	202.853

Domain	2012	2013
Employee's engagement	-	-
NGOs supporting (approximate value)	2.300.000	3.000.000
TOTAL	4.113.408	6.764.425

Source: Author's own processing

In the seven years since the company promoted the CSR strategic approach (2007 - 2013), was allocated over 37.5 million Euros for the development of social responsibility programs in six areas (more than 11 million just in the last two years). In each of these areas, the company asserts the strategic goal and the main lines of action, summarized in the following Table:

Table 5. Petrom's CSR strategic goals

<p>Education <i>Strategic objective:</i> broadening the access to education by upgrading the infrastructure, supporting programs for education performance, and developing of leadership skills and entrepreneurial thinking <i>Main lines of action:</i> entrepreneurship education, education for leadership and performance, education for safety and prevention, ensuring the rights to education.</p>
<p>Community's Development <i>Strategic Objective:</i> acting in response to local needs, through specific projects and infrastructure works <i>Main lines of action:</i> developing of local infrastructure, creating the communities' resources centers, supporting volunteering for disadvantaged communities</p>
<p>Environment: <i>Strategic objective:</i> protecting biodiversity and supporting projects that promote clean transport, green energy, waste reduction and recycling creative recycling <i>Main lines of action:</i> planting and foresting, biodiversity protection actions, ecological actions</p>
<p>Health: <i>Strategic objective:</i> modernization of emergency and health infrastructures from the communities in which it operates, supporting medical prevention programs and training health professionals <i>Main lines of action:</i> health and emergency infrastructure support, health education, prevention programs</p>
<p>Employees' Involvement <i>Strategic objective:</i> achieving volunteering projects and supporting employee's engagement initiatives dedicated communities in Romania. <i>Main lines of action:</i> running volunteer projects, stimulating redirect 2% of income tax to community problems</p>
<p>NGOs' supporting <i>Strategic objective:</i> the company is important supporter of civil society by funding projects of the NGO sector <i>Main lines of action:</i> supporting NGOs and social entrepreneurship</p>

Source: Author's own processing

The structure of community relations is, thus, very clear, enabling dynamic evaluation of projects, and the multi-annual strategic objectives coherence.

II. Dedicated web pages to the CSR activities - dedicated web page is accessible directly from the Home page, main menu Sustainability. Well - correlated with the major areas of social involvement (stated in annual reports), website provides key information on:

- the company's vision of social responsibility related areas - Health, Safety, Security, Environment Management (HSSE Management), human rights, diversity, business ethics, stakeholder adopted policy, assumed values;
- Education for Development (in the community and society) - includes actions as vocational trainings, local labor development, local suppliers development, educational initiatives in the energy field and entrepreneurship;
- Environmental management - are distinctly addressed few major directions: carbon management (reducing the carbon intensity of the company's activities) and water management (Statement on Water Management), environment protection (policy and guidelines, waste management, management of drilling mud, spills and leaks, ensuring biodiversity), product liability and traceability (product quality management, operational stages from production to storage, transport and sale etc.);
- new energy and innovation - there are presented efforts in R & D on hydrogen based energy and second generation fuels and the partnerships with universities, non-university research institutes and different industrial partners;
- Recognition and awards, highlighting how the company's work for the community is valued.

CONCLUSIONS

Not focusing just on the image benefit when engaging in CSR is vital, but on the other side the image bust is an important incentive for any business organization. CSR communication is an important part in the implementation of a CSR program, especially in a strategic approach where results need to be visible and transparent for interested stakeholders and good external CSR communication is to be achieved.

For Petrom from our analysis we noticed that the company uses all the main communication channels to promote its CSR commitment, including Social Media Networks, thus assuring a great addressability for interested stakeholders. "Tara lui Andrei" Petrom's CSR project is considered the most successful CSR project in Romania, Petrom was awarded as the biggest sponsor and the corporation with the highest impact in the history of Habitat for humanity programs for Romania and Europe in 2009, and from our perspective Petrom holds a leading position in the area of CSR communication in Romania.

Although from a strategic approach of CSR, focused on the impact that the Petrom has on the natural environment and people, the company needs to improve its policy of protecting the natural environment and its relationship with employees (as an argument for that, for instance, Petrom had and has been fined or sued for these issues), for the CSR communication activity their involvement proves dedication and long term commitment, thus giving the company a benchmarking position.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported from the European Social Fund through Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013, project number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/134197, project title "Performance and Excellence in Postdoctoral Research in Romanian Economics Science Domain".

REFERENCES

- Bhattacharya, CB, Sen S., Korschun D., (2011). *Leveraging corporate responsibility: the stakeholder route to maximizing business and social value*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- Bowen, H.R., (1953). *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*, New York: Harper & Row
- Davis, K., (1960). Can business afford to ignore social responsibilities? *California Management Review*, 2, 70-76
- Doane, D. (2005). The Myth of CSR. The problem with assuming that companies can do well while also doing good is that markets don't really work that way. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2005.
- Drucker, P. F. (1954). *The practice of management*, New York: Harper & Row
- Friedman, M., (1970). The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits. *The New York Times Magazine*
- Ghalib, A. K., Agupusi, P., (2011). *How socially responsible are multinational corporations? Perspectives from the developing world*, Working Paper 32, DEV Working Paper Series, The School of International Development, University of East Anglia, UK
- Gligor-Cimpoieru, D. (2012). *Proposing a Model for Implementing a Corporate Social Responsibility Program in a Strategic Approach*, Timișoara Journal of Economics, Volume 5, Issue 18, pg. 272-284
- Gligor-Cimpoieru, D. C., Munteanu, V. P., (2013). *The Strategic Approach of CSR for The Banking System in Romania*, unpublished paper, presented at the International Conference "Beyond Business as Usual. CSR Trends" Faculty of Management, University of Łódź, Poland
- Graafland, J.J., Eijffinger, S.C.W. & SmidJohan, H. (2004). Benchmarking of Corporate Social Responsibility: Methodological Problems and Robustness, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 53 (1-2), 51-71
- Iamandi, I. E. (2012). Empirical Analysis on CSR Communication in Romania: Transparency and Participation. *The Romanian Economic Journal*, no. 46, 25-50
- Johnson, H. L. (1971). *Business in contemporary society: Framework and issues*, Belmont: Wadsworth
- Kotler, P. & Lee, N. (2005). *Corporate Social Responsibility – Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons
- Murray, K.B. & Montanary, J.R. (1986). Strategic Management of the Socially Responsible Firm: Integrating Management and Marketing Theory, *Academy of Management Review*, 11(4), 815-827
- Oancea, D., Diaconu, B., (2010). *Transparență și credibilitate în practicile de responsabilitate socială corporatistă*, <http://www.csr-romania.ro/cercetari/transparența-si-credibilitate-in-csr.pdf>
- Øyvind, I., Bartlett, J., May, S., (2011). *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility*, Wiley
- Perez-Batres, L. A., Doh, J., Miller, V. & Pisani M. J. (2012). Stakeholder Pressures as Determinants of CSR Strategic Choice: Why do Firms Choose Symbolic Versus Substantive Self-Regulatory Codes of Conduct?, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 110 (2), 157-172
- Porter, M. E. & Kramer, M.R. (2002). The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy, *Harvard Business Review*, 80 (12), 56-69

- Porter, M. E. & Kramer, M.R. (2006). Strategy & society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility, *Harvard Business Review*, 84(12), 78–92
- Preston, L., and Post J. (1975). *Private Management and Public Policy: The Principle of Public Responsibility*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Steiner, G. A. (1971). *Business and society*. New York: Random House.
- Tehemar, S. (2011). *Communication Model in the Healthcare Service Sector*, http://www.dsfh.med.sa/eng/images/stories/csr_communication_model_in_dsfh.pdf
- Tehemar, S., (2014). *Communication in the CSR Context*, <http://bookboon.com/en/communication-in-the-csr-context-ebook>
- www.petro.com
- www.csrmedia.ro