



**“Social Responsibility
of Universities in Europe
and Development
of a Community
Reference Framework”**



EU-USR
UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN EUROPE

Gabriel DIMA












The social dimension of Higher Education

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- **Two year** research project (2012- 2014)
- **EC - Lifelong Learning Program - Erasmus Multilateral Projects - Social dimension of higher education:**

“Raise awareness and development of social responsibility of higher education institutions (USR)”















VISION

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Current context:

- Need for a **common USR strategy in Europe**
- **Imbalance in SR actions** among European universities

Purpose:

- Development of a **European program and networking** between European universities in SR
- Enhance **university social action** at European level and beyond plus the **exchange of good practices**



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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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*“Create an **European model to enhance USR** in a long-term perspective, through an holistic approach.”*

- Open **benchmarking system** to map USR competencies
- **European model** for the enhancement of USR
- **USR definition** in the member states
- **USR good practices** identification
- Creation of a **European USR network**



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EXPECTED IMPACT

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- Fostering **common policies** through networking
- **Framework** for European universities/national governments
- Making socially active and **responsible teachers and students**
- **University community awareness** of its social dimension
- System for identifying and evaluating **USR best practices**



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USR DEFINITION

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We define USR as “The responsibilities of a (European) university for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical strategies that:

- promote and encourage among students and staff behaviors consistent with the values of justice, equality, participative democracy, social responsibility and sustainability;



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USR DEFINITION (cont')

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- contribute to sustainable development including the health and welfare of society;
- take into account the expectations of stakeholders;
- are in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior;
- accord with the relevant norms of transparency and public accountability.”



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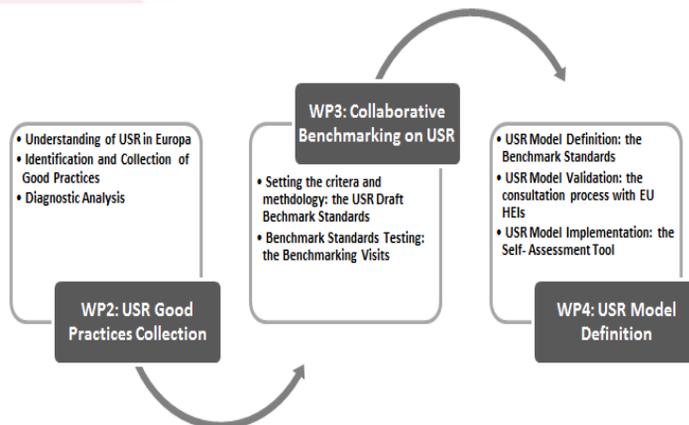
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THE USR PROJECT PHASES

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USR GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION (cont')

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- 40 cases of good practice on university social responsibility have been collected in fourteen European countries (UK, Sweden, Ireland, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Romania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy);
- The good practice collection has been made Based on a good practice identity card template.



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USR GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION (cont')

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The thematic focuses of the practices include the core subjects of social responsibility of ISO 26000.

- Organizational governance;
- Human rights;
- Labour practices;
- The environment;
- Fair operating practices;
- Consumer issues;
- Community involvement and development.



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USR GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION (cont')

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The analysis of USR good practice involved:

- tabulation with geographical area, thematic focus and the elements that qualify the practice as 'good practice';
- world analysis with the use of software QSR NVivo 10;
- a matrix with ISO 26000 (The International Standard on Social Responsibility) core subjects and the UNESCO 1998 "World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty First Century";
- case studies.

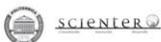


USR GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION (cont')

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Table-5.-Elements that potentially qualify the cases as 'good-practice'

University	Scale-operation	Avail-evaluat.	Intern./national-reputat.	Transf	Quality-assur.	Innov.	Durat.	Vision	Recogn.	Other
Birbeck-(UK)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Bradford-(UK)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kent-(UK)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Leicester-(UK)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nottingham-(UK)	x		x	x	x	x				x
Wales-(UK)			x	x				x	x	
Edinburgh-(UK)	x			x						
Dublin-city-(IRE)				x		x	x			
Hear-(IRE)	x		x	x		x				
Dublin-Institute-(IRE)	x		x	x	x	x				
Estonia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Gävle-(SWE)		x		x	x	x				
Lund-(SWE)	x		x	x	x	x				
Uppsala-(SWE)	x	x	x	x	x	x				
Northern-Europe-total=	10	7	11	14	9	12	6	5	5	1
Graz-(AU)	x			x						x
Webster-(AU)			x	x						
Sustainability 4u-(AU)	x		x	x		x				



USR GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION (cont')

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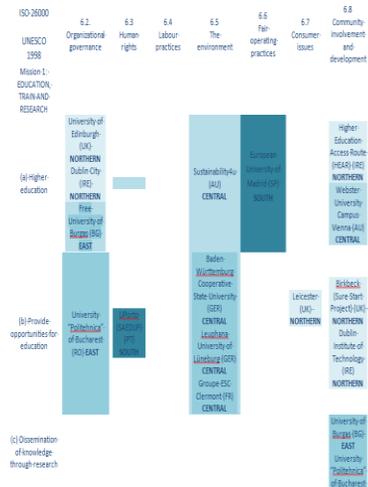
- The word analysis reveals that 'development', 'education', 'social' and 'community' are the most frequent words;
- There are groups of words that might give us some indications on SR of universities, such as:
 - 'research' and 'training';
 - 'environment', 'sustainability' and 'human rights';
 - 'impact', 'evaluation', 'assurance' and 'management';
 - 'innovation', 'involvement' and 'cooperation'.



USR GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION (cont')

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For the analysis of the practices we used two frameworks: ISO 26000 and 'The World Declaration on Higher Education for the twenty-century: vision and action' (UNESCO, 1998);



USR GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION (cont')

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PRACTICE	ISO 26000 AND UNESCO (1998)	INNOVATIVE ASPECTS
1- Sustainability-4U	The environment- Mission:1-(a) higher education	Combination-of-expertise-with- inter-university-collaboration
2-Madrid	Fair operating practices Mission:1-(a) higher education	Curricular-sustainability- External-monitoring-and- assessment
3-HEAR	Community-involvement-and- development- Mission:1-(a) higher education	Admission-scheme
4-SAEDUP	Human rights Mission:1-(b) provide- opportunities-for-education	Active-involvement-of- students Link-research-with-practice- inter-university-collaboration
5-Leuphana	The-environment Mission:1-(b) provide- opportunities-for-education	Curricular-sustainability
6-Leicester	Consumer-issues Mission:1-(b) provide- opportunities-for-education	Integration-in-job-market
7-Groningen	Community-involvement-and- development- Mission:1-(c)-dissemination-of- knowledge-thru-research	Research-on-current-issues-of- society
8-LINK	Community-involvement-and- development Mission:1-(d)-cultural-pluralism- and-diversity	Creation-of-network
9- Volunteering-UP	Community-involvement-and- development Mission:1-(e)-democratic- citizenship	Giving-importance-to-extra- curricular-activities

A selection of 19 cases according to the elements of the matrix has been made for describing how good practice of social responsibility in universities operates.



EU-USR DRAFT STANDARDS

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The standards for USR being developed and used in this Project are derived, in part, from:

- ISO 26000 (The International Standard on Social Responsibility);
- UNESCO 1998 “World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty First Century”,
- the reiteration in the UNESCO 2009 “Communique from the World Conference on Higher Education: The New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research for Societal Change and Development”



EU-USR DRAFT STANDARDS (cont')

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- the Council of Europe's 2006 "Declaration on the Responsibility of Higher Education for a Democratic Culture - Citizenship, Human Rights and Sustainability"
- the European Commission's 2011 "Renewed EU Strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility"
- and other relevant sources.



BENCHMARKING

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- BM Visits were conceived of as a series of incremental steps to allow the exploratory application of the (Draft) Benchmarking Standards, in relation to the iterative process of identifying and analyzing examples of 'good practice' identified in WP2.
- 5 BM Visits: University Politehnica of Bucharest (RO), University of Porto (PT), University of Cadiz (ES), Open University of Catalunya (ES), University of Edinburgh (UK)



EU-USR MODEL

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- The University Social Responsibility Model (USR Model) has been configured as a Self-Assessment Based Model, built around a set of Benchmark Standards;
- The validation of the Benchmark Standards and the relevant areas of social responsibility have been achieved through a process of consultation carried out with experts and key stakeholders in partners' Universities, other European Universities and other Higher Education Institutions.



EU-USR MODEL (cont')

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- The rationale of this process of consultation has been based in the need to agree a generic framework for reflection and improvement on University Social Responsibility in Europe.
- The consultation has been founded in three key elements of the model:
 - The **Model Coherence** with University missions, values and activities;
 - The **Model Areas** based on the seven core subjects;
 - The **Model Usability**.



CONCLUSIONS

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Three key steps in the implementation of a USR strategy:

- First step: **Knowing**
- Second step: **Raising Awareness and Convincing**
- Third Step: **Compromising and Involving**



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CONCLUSIONS (cont')

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Main Drivers:

- Stakeholders involvement;
- Personal willingness and involvement;
- Strategic plans,
- Proper institutional framework,
- Coordination of all practices of social responsibility,
- Cooperation and communication channels,
- Public access to information.



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CONCLUSIONS (cont')

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Main Barriers:

- Lack of economic resources;
- Lack of internal monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Excessive formalism and bureaucracy;
- Low level of internal democracy;
- Lack of an organisational culture;
- Scarce institutional support.

CONCLUSIONS (cont')

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- A commitment towards society is more and more present in the culture and practices of European HE institutions.

- As Geryk (2011) states:

“An organisation reaches its highest form of development when its mission merges with that of society. It leads to a situation where the social mission is perceived as an integral part of the vision of the organisation’s development. It is then that a university becomes a truly responsible organisation and the rules of social responsibility are fully integrated with its strategic goals.”(p. 63)

PARTNERS

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 Lifelong Learning Programme

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Thank you, Mulțumesc, Gracias, Obrigado, Merci, Grazie



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