



## Sustainability vs. Crisis: Examining the impact of COVID-19 and other recent crisis on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability regarding relationships between for-profit and non-profit organizations.

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### Research Questions

- Were companies and NGOs that had already built sustainability and innovation into their business structure better prepared to handle the COVID-19 and economic crisis and in what way?
- How did COVID-19 and the economic crisis change the relationship between for-profit organizations' CSR/sustainability programs and NGOs?

### Background

- Both for-profit and non-profit organizations struggled to meet client needs during the pandemic.
- Organizations needed to change the way they did business overnight.
- Some organizations did better than others during the crisis.

### Methodology

- Semi structured in-depth interviews with leaders in for-profit and non-profit organizations
- Coded using a-priori categories based on literature.



### Findings from first study (USA and India)



- Partnerships between organizations were of critical importance during the crisis
  - The crisis gave organizations time to evaluate their partnerships.
  - Push toward fewer, stronger relationships
- Organizations lost both employees and volunteers while the demand for the services often increased.
- NGOs had to innovate to continue to meet the needs of their clients.
  - Some of the changes improved client interactions



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Table I: Challenges and changes as an effect of Pandemic worldwide in For-Profit Organizations\*

| Challenges faced by the employers due to Covid crisis | Emergent changes in the work-practices to combat the crisis   |
|---|---|
| Connectivity and belongingness                        | Online meet platforms.<br>Digitalization of organizational functions<br>Virtual teams                               |
| Curbs on any kind of movement and travel              | Introducing new practices to reward and appreciate employees.<br>Adopt 'indulgence'                                 |
| Change in individual lifestyle                        | Introducing workplace protocols towards safety and awareness  |
| Mental health   | Counselling sessions on mindfulness and well-being.<br>Role of coaches and mentors signified.                       |
| Improper quality of work-life                         | Emphasis on adopting flexible work practices<br>Focus on career progression   |
| Growth and progress opportunities                     | Critical skill development in emerging areas.   |
| Health and safety                                     | Safe working conditions, supportive environment for psychological demands, adhering to legal and ethical standards. |

Table II: Challenges and changes as an effect of Pandemic worldwide in Non-Profit Organizations\*

| Challenges faced by the NPOs due to Covid                                | Emergent changes to combat the crisis  |
|--|--|
| Loss of revenue  | Cost cutting,<br>dipping into reserves,<br>new fundraising methods                                 |
| Decrease in number of volunteers/ having to layoff or furlough employees | changing the way services are provided<br>doing more with less                                     |
| Difficulty in getting essential supplies                                 | reducing capacity<br>changing focus of services  |
| Increase in demand for services deemed essential                         | Allowing clients to access services more often<br>Using technology to provide more remote services |
| Changes in methods of fundraising  | virtual fundraising events<br>crowdsourcing<br>writing more grant applications                     |
| Change in flow of clients and clients' interactions                      | Virtual meetings<br>Scheduled drop in's<br>Drive throughs for less contact                         |

\* Source: Created by authors based on interviews



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### Current research



#### Background

- Replicating first study in Central and Eastern Europe
- Multiple crises in the region not just COVID but also the war in Ukraine and energy crisis (etc.).
- Semi structured interviews
  - Questions modified to fit new audience
  - Interviews will be either face to face or on Zoom based on interviewee preference.
- A-priori coding based on literature

#### Differences in current research

- Will be interviewing in more countries, study will be more cross cultural
- NGOs are different in CEE than in the US or India
- Relationships between NGOs and for-profit organizations are also different
- Taking a close look how for-profit organizations and NGOs work together
- Focus more on sustainability
- Broaden interviews to include experts in the field in each country



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### Taking it to the classroom



#### International Business Strategy

- Case studies on CSR and impact of the pandemic
- Discussions on changes in their companies' strategies

#### Multinational Marketing

- Discussions on logistics and movement of goods
- Journal reflections on changes in marketing and products
- Discussions on changes in Cause Related Marketing

#### International Organization Behavior

- Cases on diversity and impact of pandemic
- Discussions on hiring practices and changes due to pandemic