**Description of Study**

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**Title**

Crisis vs. Sustainability: Examining the impact of COVID-19 and the economic/supply crisis on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability regarding relationships between for-profit and non-profit (NGOS) organizations in Central and Eastern Europe. (CEE) Lessons learned and preparation for moving forward.

**Project Description**

We are working on a research project that examines Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability practices adopted by for-profit companies and non-profit or NGO organizations to handle the unprecedented disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent crises. The findings will provide into insight for companies so that they can be better prepared for the next crisis. CSR is defined as “a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public.” (Fernando, 2022) While the COVID pandemic has become more endemic, the events in the world today (the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, inflation, supply chain issues etc.) mean that the overall crisis is not over, and companies are still feeling the fallout.

We hypothesize that that firms (for profit or nonprofit) that have prior experience in sustainable innovations or innovation eco-systems or frugal innovations, were better placed to respond quicker in pandemic situations with simultaneous demand and supply shock. With this assumption the paper will use a multi-case study method to identify the various CSR/ Sustainability strategies companies and NPO/NGOs in CEE have adopted to combat the impact of pandemic and subsequent crises in the society. The CSR or sustainability strategies adopted will then be critically evaluated against the mechanisms of sustainability innovation for achieving better organizational outcome and provide recommendations for companies and NPO/NGOs moving forward. We will be using the multiple case study method since it allows for more variability to be discovered, more relationships to be compared, and more opportunities for generalizations and a testable theory to be developed. (Yin 1994)

We are hoping to interview top management in both for-profit organizations and non-profit organizations (including NGOs, NPOs and social enterprises). Ideally it would be the CEO or top sustainability officer in the company. The only requirement is the company be locally owned or have headquarters in a country in the CEE region.

CSR and sustainability strategies are well-known metrics of organizational relations with stakeholders and communities. Organizations are the part of the larger economy and the community around where it operates. Therefore, supporting the common social good has become just an important goal as delivering shareholder value and profitability for the organizations. Besides the CSR implementation, organizations have presented great enthusiasm in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) and adopting a proactive approach towards them. Ensuring resource efficiency, healthy cities and nature conservation have been few of the important concerns of organizational sustainability strategies. But all these seems to have taken a backseat in this time of crisis. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world will influence the developments of CSR and sustainability strategies of organizations. As organizations are forced to change and refocus their CSR priorities, nonprofit organizations (NPOs) will be impacted by the changes, particularly as other funding sources such as foundations and individuals find themselves unable to contribute the same as they did pre-COVID. At the same time, demand for NPOs services has increased significantly during COVID which has made the relationship with for-profit organizations and their CSR more critical.

If your company agrees to participate in this study, the only cost to you will be about an hour to 75 minutes of your time to conduct the interview using Zoom. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. Both the recording and the transcript will be stored in a password protected computer. Any hard copies of the transcript will be store in a locked drawer in my campus office. There is minimal risk that any of this data will be lost or stolen. I will not share your name with anyone else and will not use your name or the name of your company in the resulting paper without written permission from you.

Prior to the interview, I will supply you will a list of potential questions I plan on asking to get us started and an informed consent letter with details about the research protocol. You are free to not answer any of the questions you are not comfortable with or even be asked to be removed from the study at any time without penalty.

If you are interested in participating in the study please contact me, Jennifer A. Pope, at one of the following emails. We can set up a meeting at your convenience.

[popeje@gvsu.edu](mailto:popeje@gvsu.edu) or [Jennifer.Pope@iedc.si](mailto:Jennifer.Pope@iedc.si)