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ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND ECO-ETHICAL PROGRAM AS SPECIFIC AND DIRECT WAY TO SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITY.

Summary. Ethical leadership is of significant importance in every organization and the organizational practice in general, because the leaders who encourage ethical behaviour and activity inspire others to follow their example. Ethical leadership and the implementation of ethical programmes in organizations exist as specific, yet direct ways towards sustainable development, sustainable communities, and sustainable regions, if they contain elements of sustainability. However, it is necessary to initiate an expert discourse with the social partners, begin cooperation with top teams, and formulate common strategies regarding competencies of the leaders and experts in ethics. The aim of our article is to clarify the relevant theoretical framework as well as the concept of sustainability, determine ethical principles and goals, and last but not least, justify their relevance in the context of organizational practice, sustainable development, and sustainable communities.

Keywords: applied ethics, organizational ethics, leadreship, ethical program, sustainability, sustainability development, organization, expert on ethics.

PRZYWÓDZTWO ETYCZNE I PROGRAM EKO-ETYCZNY JAKO SPECYFICZNA, PROSTA DROGA DO ZRÓWNOWAŻONYCH SPOŁECZNOŚCI

Streszczenie. Przywództwo etyczne w praktyce organizacyjnej w każdej organizacji jest bardzo ważną kwestią, ponieważ przywódcy, którzy zabiegają o etyczne postępowanie i zachowanie, jednocześnie motywują do tego samego innych. Przywództwo etyczne i wdrażanie strategii etycznych w organizacjach mogą być specyficznymi, lecz prostymi drogami do zrównoważonego rozwoju, zrównoważonych społeczności i zrównoważonych regionów, jeśli uwzględniają aspekty zrównoważonego rozwoju. W związku z tym konieczne jest rozpoczęcie specjalistycznego dyskursu, nawiązanie współpracy z czołowymi zespołami, rozwijanie dialogu z partnerami społecznymi i sformułowanie wspólnych strategii dotyczących kompetencji liderów i ekspertów w dziedzinie etyki. W niniejszym

artykule Autorka postara się wyjaśnić ramy teoretyczne i koncepcję zrównoważonego rozwoju, określić zasady etyczne i cele oraz uzasadnić ich znaczenie z perspektywy praktyki organizacyjnej, zrównoważonego rozwoju i zrównoważonych społeczności.

Słowa kluczowe: etyka stosowana, etyka organizacyjna, przywództwo, program etyczny, zrównoważony rozwój, organizacja, ekspert ds. etyki.

1. Preliminary notes and status quo

One of the key tasks of organizational ethics is to justify ethically desirable behaviour in different kinds of organizations, but also to design and implement ethical tools and programmes, which inherently include principles and values of sustainability and sustainable development. Since organizations do not exist in a social vacuum, they have to react to both the current ecological situation and global environmental issues. Our behaviour has incorporated an organizational dimension (we have become an organizational society). We have to consider the fact that through their activity, organizations affect the environment in which they function. These organizations have a moral responsibility, which obliges them to analyse the impact of their activities in the context of environmental practice, justice, fair play, honesty, and ecological responsibility. The environmental paradox and related risks, as well as the limits of the biosphere, require us to accept the ecological situation within a new environmental paradigm. Organizations require a specific type of ethics that can provide a methodology for the rehabilitation of organizational culture and creation of ethical policies, as well as programmes, which would incorporate sustainability and sustainable development. Contemporary experts in ethics are expected to design tools and strategies for the moral development of organizations leading towards sustainability in these times characterized by ecological issues[1].

Therefore, it is obviously requested from universities and higher educational institutions to prepare future experts and leaders in the implementation of sustainable development and sustainability in general. Based on this fact, it can be stated that not only theoretical starting points need to be analysed in the context of implementing a new environmental paradigm into organizational ethics, but also new theoretical requirements, and the social ecological context creates prerequisites for a new, specific type of ethical analysis. Society must learn how to deal with sustainability issues. The world is globalized, society flooded with hybrids. Many theoreticians agree that in organizations as a specific type of communities – whether we are

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[1] The social ecological status quo requires rational governance based on the ability to integrate values and awareness of sustainability not only into education, but also the personal and professional lives of every individual, and every community. It is literally only the university sector that can critically solve the issue of sustainable development, as it prepares future leaders in all kinds of social practice, challenges dominant paradigms, and carries out pioneering research.

speaking of political or business companies, or NGOs – ethics is not only a mere function. It also exists in the form of a moral vision, ethical strategies and programmes, and it is a precondition of their long-term effective functioning. Ethics is also an important competence for leaders and members in relation to the moral functioning and achieving of goals for every organization.[2]

Higher education for experts in applied ethics, future experts or consultants on ethics in different kinds of organizations has a relatively short history in the Slovak context. Therefore, it is not surprising that strategic documents and the vision of sustainability have been taken into consideration just marginally so far. More or less, this issue is limited to applying the sustainability paradigm through environmental and ecological ethics, or as a partial goal – as a component of social responsibility, which integrates ecological responsibility[3].

2. Sustainability and sustanable development – theoretical notes

The analysis of definitions shows that the discourse and meanings of sustainability and sustainable development are an interpretation of the following facts: it is a transformative and reflexive process with the aim of integrating sustainability values not only into educational systems, but also into our personal and professional lives, organizational life, and sustainable communities. It is a process and a holistic approach to achieving an integration of social, economical, and environmental justice. It is governed by the "less is more" principle (in the context of ecological modernization). It is the key to new ecological businesses. The most important principles include effectiveness, advisability and suitability. The key role is played by expert knowledge and competences. As a good theoretical base and starting point, the intersection of the theory of organizational ethics and the concept of sustainable development can be used[4].

"The global ecological crisis should become a catalyst for the far-reaching revisiting of basic values, principles, and attitudes in all areas of human existence, knowledge, and activity"[5]. This should apply to all areas of social practice, including the organizational one.

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[2] Fobel P.: Nástroje riadenia akademickej etiky, [in:] Akademická etika. Tvorba a implementácia etického kódexu. FHV UMB, Banská Bystrica 2011. s. 37-64; Fox 2007, Klimková 2015, Bednár 2015).

[3] Even a UNESCO report claims that Education for Sustainability Development (ESD) has not reached its full potential yet, and there are obvious obstacles in overcoming interdisciplinary limits. An important tool for the implementation of sustainability and sustainable development is the preparation of leaders, managers and ethical consultants who would adopt sustainability principles along with the tools for their implementation and coordination in social practice.

[4] The pilot platform for social critical research can be the University Educators for Sustainable Development project (Dlouhá et al., 2015, s. 136). This inspiring theoretical and practical project aims to create approaches and opportunities for fellow university teachers to prepare students in all kinds of study programmes and fields of study; develops sustainability and applies its principles in various occupations, being responsible globally.

[5] Vladyková Ľ.: Úvod do filozofie ekológie. Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach, Filozofická fakulta, Košice 2015, s.105.

An ecological crisis can be defined as an ecological situation in which current civilization and human society has reached a critical point in their social relationship to the environment. The ecological impact of human activities cannot be perceived exclusively from the technological point of view; the impact is, in fact, also moral, social and political. The conflicts between needs, goals, standards and values in the current globalizing society that ignores the ecological costs of its reproduction, as well as societies based on market economy, expansion and growth, along with welfare, affect the correctives and normatives of our cultural strategies. According the many theoretists, ecological risks increase as the actual impact falls behind social activities; many of them still remain invisible or veiled, and only science can reveal them. If we put the current ecological crisis into the context of relevant social relationships and activities, its geographical, political and economic position would be obvious. There is no point in further repeating what the parameters of this ecological crisis are. What seems more relevant and fundamental is the systemic co-opting of ecological criticism in social sciences and humanities, but also in the economic and political institutional frameworks, and value the orientation of individual moral actors.

Our methodological starting points related to sustainability and sustainable development for an application of these concepts in the context of organizational ethics focus on the following three areas: (1) *moral leadership* (i.e. competences required from ethical consultants or experts in the application of the paradigm and tools for sustainability and sustainable development). (2) *bureaucracy – responsibility – responsibility mechanisms triad* (i.e. a hierarchical structure of responsibility mechanisms in an organization and ecological responsibility , which are components of social responsibility); (3) *an ethical programme as a direct and specific way towards sustainability* (an ethical programme consisting of ethical tools as an important component of the ethical policy of an organization).

It is true that the oldest and most frequently used tools of environmental protection are normative environmental tools, which are a part of environmental policy. They have undergone a certain development and their goal is to regulate the activities of legal entities and natural persons (e.g. IPPC – Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control; or REACH – Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, etc.). However, these are technological and legal tools of a normative nature, and their goal is to limit environmental impacts, i.e. these are the rules that must be followed in practice. In fact, they are not related to moral standards, and do not explicitly call for ecological responsibility. Modern organizations require more than just functional environmental legislation and effective management to implement organizational changes. There is the concept of corporate social responsibility, often referred to, but defined differently by various authors. This concept represents a competitive advantage for organizations. It is perceived as a quality mark of business organizations. Without regard to different definitions, the main principle is quite clear – to do business in a way that is beneficial for more people around. Besides attributes and components, almost all interpretations mention three areas in which responsible business

is reflected. Such organization (company, medical facility, educational institution, NGO, or a cultural organization) would focus on economic growth, but also the social and environmental consequences of its activity. However, ecological values and ecological responsibility are named rather vaguely and they are not very convincing, as they are of a rather declarative nature. Another important factor is that environmental strategies and policy generate increased costs (mainly in business and marketing), or can even create strategic barriers.

The question remains, how to design and implement an ethical strategy covering sustainability principles in an organization[6]. Organizational values need to be enriched through values of sustainability and ecology. But, what way and means should we select when our perception of the social world is based on values and beliefs that contradict the latter two?

When we begin to understand how complicated the relationships within this system are (there is an interdisciplinary overlap among organizational ethics, ecological ethics and the concept of sustainable development), we see that it is going to be a hard journey. Therefore, it is important to suppress specific interests and demarcations in interpersonal relationships within organizational ethics, and move towards ecological values and sustainability principles. The partial issues need to be integrated into a whole, and simplified opinions according to which *"the moral development of organizations through the implementation of general ethical principles into the organizational practice"*[7] need to be rejected.

3. The Concept of Moral Leader and Ways towards Sustainability

Understanding ethical leadership, ethical environment, and culture in the context of sustainability and sustainable development in organizations is a crucial task in the 21st century. Leaders – as moral leaders – play a crucial role in forming an organizational environment and culture[8]. There are several reasons for this. In the era of globalization, a new global environment is emerging, thus affecting the quality of economic growth regarding services, goods, competitiveness of organizations, and also relationships within them. Last but not least, it affects the relationships between man and nature, economy and nature, the technosphere and environment.

The implementation of ethics, sustainability and ecological responsibility into organizational practice is a current issue. It is also a complicated one as it exists on global, systemic, and even individual levels. The leaders are expected to manage, but also lead the way and do what is necessary to achieve the goals set by the given organization. In successful organizations, employee leadership is no longer merely a routine component of traditional

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[6] Intersection of ethics and the economy takes place at different levels, depending on the subject of the case in economic activity and distinguishes plane micro-levels, mezzo-level and macro-level. See more: Hrehová, 2011.
[7] Čmelíková Z.: Etika ako nástroj morálneho rozvoja organizácie. Computer Pres a.s. 2010, p. 20.
[8] Rest 1986, Rhode 2006; Trevino et al. 2003; Trevino a Nelson 2011; Trevino et al. 2007.

management: supervision, monitoring, allocation and team building. We have gone further. *"True leadership involves moving followers toward the realization of the vision that the leader has formulated to fulfil the organization's mission"*[9]. This vision reflects the course on which the organization has embarked – it is a representation of the desired future of the company. The mission can be defined as the reason why the organization exists in the first place. *"We have to clearly state who we are, what we are doing, and where we are going"*[10].

To keep up with the ever-changing social, political, economical, ecological and environmental, informational and communication, and of course, the moral environment of the organization, the leader constantly critically and ethically evaluates goals, principles, values, strategies and also leadership and monitoring approaches.

Based on different case studies carried out in Slovakia, it seems that there is a problem with ethical leadership in many organizations. It is evident in politics, business, sports and educational institutions. The symptoms include the erosion of integrity, injustice, corruption, excessive ambitiousness, inconsiderate cultural strategies, and decisions regarding the environment.[11] The crucial reason for this situation is related to the lack of ethical power and insufficient ethical institutionalisation, i.e. the problem is present on two levels: (1) the systemic level (environmental policy including normative tools on the national level facing the pressure of globalization); (2) the organizational level (insufficient normative tools of the organizational and ethical infrastructure); (3) the individual level (participants with internal access lacking competences needed for the implementation of sustainability principles). The leader of an organization – as the moral participant responsible for the behaviour and actions of their employees – employs approaches and strategies which exceed the mere obligation of acting in accordance with the law. They are deliberately creating an ethical infrastructure in the organization through ethical programmes which consist of the following components (ethical tools) and their selection: vision, values, ethical code, ethical expertise, ethical training, ethical committees, hot lines, system of control and reward, monitoring system, and ethical leadership[12].

Competences of organization leaders related to sustainability and sustainable development are closely connected to their professional training at universities currently addressing the issue of sustainability. The key role is played by the principles of *Education for Sustainable*

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[9] Kanungo R.N and Mendonca M.: Corporate Leadership in the Context of Liberalization in India, „The Social Engineer", v. 5, no. 2, 1996, s. 12.

[10] Čmelíková Z.: Etika ako nástroj morálneho rozvoja organizácie. Computer Pres a.s. 2010, p. 98.

[11] In the times we live in, it is important to present ourselves as green – at least on the outside. Declaring the use of green technologies, often only formally, as a sort of advertisement, which however, does not actually eliminate the impact on the environment, is a requirement (greenwashing index). The emergence of the phenomenon of greenwashing is a direct result of the development of the concept of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. See: greenwashing index scoring criteria: Available at: http://greenwashingindex.com/about-greenwashing/

[12] The Ethics & Compliance Officer Association (ECOA) and the Ethics Resource Center (ERC) announced a major strategic alliance for conducting research and providing resources to the growing community of ethics and compliance officers. Available at: http://ecoaconnects.theecoa.org/home

Development (ESD): future thinking, critical and creative thinking, participation and participative thinking, partnerships and systemic thinking.

These principles lead towards the particular goals of implementing sustainability and sustainable development into organizational ethics, but also result in the following questions:

(a) What should the competences of leaders regarding sustainable development be?

(b) What kind of leadership, political and ethical tools should be developed in future leaders?

Therefore, we need a high quality training for future leaders in different types of organizational practice; a training that would cover all ethical strategies, policies and sustainable development. In the report provided by *Economic Commission for Europe, Committee on Environmental Policy* (ECE/CEP), the key importance is assigned to the fact that an exact set of competences general enough to be applicable to all fields and geographical areas cannot be determined – these competences need to be country-specific and functional in the given context.

There is no single universal model that could be implemented by every organization. Therefore, it is necessary to critically assess the specificities of every organization in order to select a suitable model based on the organizational philosophy and ethical audit, as well as normative tools for the given social sphere.

The ethics of care as a theoretical concept provides several tools and concepts of interpretation, which prove as useful and effective in the re-construction and re-conceptualization in building of our relationships to organizational practice and ecological responsibility. These tools and concepts offer models of participatory practice as well as key principles: concept of relationships, situation-relatedness and different perception of identity. They have proved useful in organizational practice, too. If social practice is perceived as moral practice (Tronto, 1993), and we realize that on one hand, we know nature, but on the other, we do not care about it enough, we are navigated towards the concept of care for the nature and environment – our home. Perhaps, the traditional term "nature protection" (the obligation to protect it) should be complemented by the concept of **caring for nature**. The ethics of care also provides a sound basis for this approach in the context of organizations. Caring for nature means integrating ecological responsibility into the organizational practice.

Care is a practice that gradually penetrates the public sphere (a shift from the private sphere towards the public one). A number of theoreticians in the field of ethics of care speak of a penetration of the values of care ethics into decision-making processes and politics.[13] In practice, it means that care becomes a deliberate activity and democracy becomes a caring democracy[14]. Community-bound deliberate practice undertaken by a local community is a

[13] Sevenhuijsen S. - Švab A., (eds.): Labyrinths of Care. The Relevance of the Ethics of Care' Perspective for Social Policy, Mirovni Inštitut, Ljubljana 2003; Tronto, J.: Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice. New York University Press, New York, 2013.

[14] Tronto J.: Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice. New York University Press, New York 2013.

simpler, sincere and targeted type of care. It is more direct and tends to address the actual needs of people or nature. As for smaller structures, decentralized leadership can be spread freely, is more flexible and allows for the generation of different types of relationships.

4. Ethical program as ethical tool for organizational and business practices

New organizational revolution (evolution) is woven from new strategies and components. These can be: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Creating Shared Value (CSV); Corporate citizenship, Sustainability and Sustainable development, or Corporate sustainability. We will not examine the distinctions between them. They are clearly described and defined In many recent studies . For organizations, firms, enterprises, the key question is: "What are norms, values, and standards which should we set for the guide our members and foster reasonable expectations among our stakeholders?" Ethical program belongs to the new strategies of organizations, companies and enterprises inherently. This is an important part of the new guidelines and ethical paths in organizational practice[15].

A well-designed and well-implemented ethics program provides all members of an organization with the guidance and information they need for effective, efficient, and responsible choices and actions. If the Ethics program consistently worked, appropriate for the type of organization or institution, then this program its own existence cultivates the moral status of the organization, supports and develops ethics organization, provides ethical guidance and navigation in dealing with ethical problems and moral dilemmas in the organization and is an important component management.

According to P. Fobel[16], ethical expertise and consultancy represents the institutional framework of the application of ethics in various areas of professional practice. This is the room for maneuver for specialists in organizational ethics and ethical advisory Consultant / expert on Ethics helps in the creation and institutionalization of programs to their more quickly adoption and adjust the organization to the same ethics regime:

•   the institutionalization of Ethics is not a one-time act, but a long process

•   the implementation of Ethics in an organization has different forms and related infrastructure with ethical: ethical policies, code of ethics, ethics program, ethics committee, professional socialization

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[15] A recent studies shows that 93 percent of the directors of companies believe that sustainability issues will be critical to the success of companies (Klimková, 2015). In fact, the term "corporate sustainability" may be a more accurate descriptive label for these attempts. Ambitious governmental, business and academic goals, and corresponding efforts have been established. Even though, my research and thinking follow and monitor the triad of goals: Organization − Sustainability − Ethical program. It will show why we need ethical program in organizations.
[16] Fobel P.: Nástroje riadenia akademickej etiky, [in:] Akademická etika. Tvorba a implementácia etického kódexu. FHV UMB, Banská Bystrica, 2011. s. 37-64.

- the promotion of ethics in the organization is also to establish a system for rewarding ethical behavior

- the involvement in ethics program as many people[17].

As stated in the corporate ethics policies and programs (Institute of Business Ethics. 2011), the ethical policy of the organization is reflected in the ethics program with four key elements: (1.) **Code of Ethics**; (2.) **Ethical training education**; (3.) **Means for reporting violations of ethical standards contained in the Code of Ethics**; (4.) **mechanism for monitoring and addressing ethical violations**.

Ethics program helps develop standards, procedures, and expectations that establish the following: *Who has authority to do what within the enterprise*; *Who is responsible for which decisions and activities*; *How people will be held accountable for their individual choices and actions*; *What stakeholders can reasonably expect from the organization or enterprise which develops standards, procedures, and expectations with complete understanding of its relevant context and organizational culture*.

The ethical policy of organization affirms that the enterprise is a good member of a community. Finally, an ethical statement commits individual members of organization to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct.

Basic Principles as theoretical background for creating of ethical program to ensure the harmonious coexistence of people with nature and to achieve sustainable growth, we will do our utmost to protect the global environment in all our corporate activities. Basic policies towards sustainability and sustainable development, incorporated into the ethics program may be:

- compliance with laws and regulations and fulfillment of social responsibilities ;
- reducing environmental loads ;
- establishing and maintaining environmental management systems ;
- developing environmental technologies ;
- social contribution efforts ;
- disclosure of environmental information .

Ethics programs focus on the value of an organization, pursuing virtue, and delivering ethical decision making and strategies for building ethical responsibilities. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, ecological ethics and environmental policy entered the common path with organizational ethics and organizational practise. Ethical leadreship and ethical programs are tools towards sustainability and sustainable development. For companies, it emerged a challenge to integrate, education for sustainable development into their lives and practice. For experts on ethics, there is emerged a challenge to integrate and implementation of sustainability into programming and creating Ethics programme for sustainable firms and ecological responsible firms.

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[17] Ibidem.

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Omówienie

Przywództwo etyczne w praktyce organizacyjnej w każdej organizacji jest bardzo ważną kwestią, ponieważ przywódcy, którzy zabiegają o etyczne postępowanie i zachowanie, jednocześnie motywują do tego samego innych. Przywództwo etyczne i wdrażanie strategii etycznych w organizacjach mogą być specyficznymi, lecz prostymi drogami do zrównoważonego rozwoju, zrównoważonych społeczności i zrównoważonych regionów, jeśli uwzględniają aspekty zrównoważonego rozwoju. W związku z tym konieczne jest rozpoczęcie specjalistycznego dyskursu, nawiązanie współpracy z czołowymi zespołami, rozwijanie dialogu z partnerami społecznymi i sformułowanie wspólnych strategii dotyczących kompetencji liderów i ekspertów w dziedzinie etyki. W niniejszym artykule Autorka postara się wyjaśnić ramy teoretyczne i koncepcję zrównoważonego rozwoju, określić zasady etyczne i cele oraz uzasadnić ich znaczenie z perspektywy praktyki organizacyjnej, zrównoważonego rozwoju i zrównoważonych społeczności.