
Conceptualising and Deploying Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Multicultural Settings: The Case For Euroleague Basketball's One Team Programme

Abstract ID: EASM-2015-305/R1 - (846)

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Date submitted: 2015-03-27

Date accepted: 2015-05-04

Type: Scientific

Keywords: Euroleague One Team Programme; Corporate Social Responsibility; Cultural Lens; Stakeholder involvement strategy; Community Needs Analysis

Category: J: Corporate Social Responsibility Communication in Sport:

Synopsis:

Abstract:

PURPOSE – The paper seeks to demonstrate the development a corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme by an international sports governing body operating in multicultural settings. The paper focuses on the Euroleague Basketball's (EB) One Team CSR programme by drawing upon lessons from international development through sport perspectives. The paper aims to explore the use of the concepts of needs analysis and adaption of a cultural lens (UNPFA, 2009) to inform effective design and implementation of new projects and the re-orientation of old CSR concepts.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND – Within CSR, most of the academic literature, or research, has focussed on defining or framing CSR through sport particularly discussing the implementation or staging of CSR activities by both sporting and non-sporting organisations. However, not much has been done regarding the practicalities of adapting corporate CSR programme aims and objectives to suit the cultural settings for particular governing bodies operating in multicultural settings. This study is underpinned by concepts of stakeholder involvement strategy (Morsing and Schultz, 2006) and proposes a framework applied by affiliate professional basketball clubs. By so doing, the design of specific CSR projects under the One Team Programme are based on process-oriented approaches focussed on sustainable community development as opposed to the old EB system characterised by target-driven, single and non-coherent CSR events (Banda and Gultresa, 2015).

METHODOLOGY/DESIGN/DATA ANALYSIS – This paper adopted a case study approach which utilised participatory action research (PAR). A qualitative

data collection approach was adopted in assessing the application of stakeholder involvement theory in programme design and assessment of the target group's needs. The views and opinions of senior management, One Team project managers, mainstream partners agencies and One Team CSR academic advisors were gathered via semi-structured interviews, focus groups, formal meetings and One Team annual workshops proceedings. Participants' views regarding the workshop structure and content were collected via textwall, an online feedback system that enable participants to write in their first language. Interview transcripts were analysed through an iterative and inductive process.

RESULTS/DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS – Contrary to the old CSR orientation within the case study organisation, the results depict that EB's CSR current orientation is firmly shaping up as a necessary business function fitting Lantos' (2001) strategic CSR conceptualisation. (Lantos, 2001) focuses on 'philanthropy aligned with profit motives' (Quester and Thompson, 2001) enabling business in the long run to achieve a financial gain from its promotion of societal welfare. The old CSR within EB was deemed to lack a business function since the target group or recipients of altruistic benefits were remotely placed from the participating professional clubs.

The new strategic CSR (Lantos, 2001) approach requires clubs to use the power of basketball, the unique capabilities of EB clubs, to integrate communities by tailoring their One Team project to local contextual needs so as to impact the target group in more meaningful ways. Contrary to the old altruistic CSR approach, a conscious attempt is made by each participating professional basketball club to engage its immediate communities in order to avoid the paternalistic approach evident in the old CSR approach. The process of stakeholder involvement is an open two-way dialogue between clubs and their communities in influencing the design and implementation of the new strategic CSR. The two-way dialogue further enhances the involvement of programme participants in the design of activities or sports drills used for elicitation of solutions to locally identified social issues.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS – Plans to undertake fieldwork research of purposively selected case studies is essential to gather 'thick descriptions' of community engagement at micro-settings in order to investigate decision-making processes (Anagnostopoulos, Byers, & Shilbury, 2014).

ORIGINALITY/VALUE – this paper's originality is strongly rooted in the processes of engagement and decision-making of CSR projects responding not only to community needs but also culturally sensitive as a corporate CSR programme in multinational settings.

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