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Sustainable Development of Organizations – Innovative Approach and Social Responsibility

Summary. *The study constantly focuses on understanding the concepts of sustainable development in scientific research and presents their comparative analysis. This fact makes it possible to present conceptually the concept of sustainable development in the international context, which increases its theoretical and practical significance. The concept of sustainable development is based on the viability of organizations, the development of which is based on innovations and personal social responsibility of managers. It was investigated that innovation is an incentive point for sustainable development and a factor in the effectiveness of organizations. Conditions for overcoming the negative factors of sustainable development and the essence of personal social responsibility are revealed.*

Keywords: *sustainable development, social responsibility, innovative approach, management, organization*

The term "sustainable development" means many things to many peoples. Rio+20 officially defines sustainable development as composed of three dimensions that must be pursued simultaneously: economic, social and environmental.

NGOs, youth groups and scientists in particular have been highly critical of this approach, because it is disconnected from the prevailing scientific consensus about the state of the global environment and does not recognize any limits to the carrying capacity of the Earth, which underpins human existence.

Developing countries, on the other hand, have generally expressed satisfaction with the strong emphasis on economic development as a means to era-

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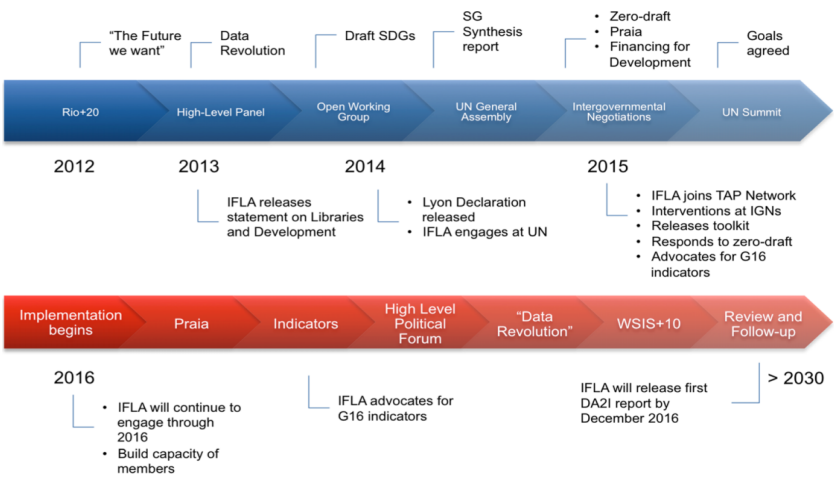
dicate poverty now reflected in the agreement[1].

Pic. 1. Timeline to the UN 2030 Agenda



Source: F. Bradley, *A world with universal literacy: The role of libraries and access to information in the UN2030 Agenda*, "International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions" 2016, № 42(2), p. 118–125.

The timeline (pic. 1) shows the major activities and outcome documents that led to adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda in September 2015 (in blue), and the timeline after implementation begins on 1 January 2016 (in red).

A global discussion on the successor to the MDG framework began several years before the 2015 expiration date of most of the MDG targets. At the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20), the UN member states agreed to establish a process to develop new international development goals to succeed the MDGs.

The Rio+20 Outcome Document – *The Future We Want*, called for an Open Working Group composed of 30 representatives of member states to decide on the methods of work to ensure full participation of stakeholders from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system[2].

In addition, the UN Development Group led a global consultation process, organized by thematic interest groups, and a global conversation through an

[1] R. Clémençon, *Welcome to the Anthropocene: Rio+20 and the Meaning of Sustainable Development*, "Journal of Environment & Developmen" 2012, № 21(3), p. 311-338.

[2] *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development*, United Nations General Assembly, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, U.N. Doc. A/ RES/70/1, 21.10.2015, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/ RES/70/1&Lang=E (accessed 10.01.2018).

electronic survey, national and regional civil society and business consultations, and academic and scientific consultations[3]. The Millennium Development Goals have been seen as the foremost global policy initiative for concretizing sustainable development. Following a proposal by Colombia and Guatemala in 2011, the process of defining a new set of global goals is well under way – the SDGs[4].

The focus on goals rather than means to achieve them is a striking similarity between the two processes. The means to achieve the goals, the transition pathways, are more contentious than the goals themselves and thus deserve much more attention in research[5].

The new United Nations 2030 Agenda is an inclusive, integrated framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a total of 169 Targets spanning economic, environmental and social development[6].

They lay out a plan for all countries to actively engage in making our world better for its people and the planet.

The UN 2030 Agenda will help all UN Member States focus their attention on poverty eradication, climate change and the development of people. By achieving this Agenda, no one will be left behind.

All countries in the world must achieve the Goals. The Goals are universal, and indivisible – all Goals and Targets much be achieved in their totality[7].

Tab. 1 sets out the 17 SDGs.

Tab. 1. Sustainable Development Goals

No	Goal
Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

[3] *The road to dignity by 2030: Ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet*, United Nations Secretary-General, Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the Post–2015 Agenda, U.N. Doc. A/69/700, 4.12.2014, http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf (accessed 11.01.2018).

[4] G. Glaser, *Policy: Base sustainable development goals on science*, "Nature. International Journal of Science" 2012, https://www.nature.com/articles/491035a (accessed 10.01.2018).

[5] F. Bradley, *A world with universal literacy': The role of libraries and access to information in the UN2030 Agenda*, "International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions" 2016, № 42(2), p. 118-125.

[6] *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda...* (accessed 10.01.2018).

[7] D.F. Frey, G. MacNaughton, *A Human Rights Lens on Full Employment and Decent Work in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*, "Journal of Workplace Rights" 2016, p. 1-13.

Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and other
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Source: D.F. Frey, G. MacNaughton, op. cit., p. 1-13.

Many of the criticisms that the human rights community raised about the MDGs – including the lack of universality, participation, transparency, equality and non-discrimination, and accountability – were central in the global consultation. Importantly, the Rio+20 Outcome Document maintained that sustainable international development and poverty eradication policies must be consistent with international law and respect for human rights[8]. The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post–2015 agenda re-affirmed this commitment to grounding the new goals and targets in respect for human rights. The Secretary-General also emphasized that the future we want must be free from poverty and built on human rights[9]. Civil society highlighted the need for human rights to be at the centre of the post–2015 development agenda. Finally, the UN human rights treaty bodies called upon the international community to integrate human rights obligations into the post–2015 development framework with specific human rights indicators and with oversight by national and international human rights mechanisms[10].

According to the Diane F. Frey and Gillian MacNaughton, SDGs and

[8] F. Bradley, op. cit., p. 118–125.

[9] *The road to dignity by 2030: Ending poverty...* (accessed 11.01.2018).

[10] *Chairpersons of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies. Joint statement of the chairpersons of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies on the post-2015 development agenda*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 05.2013, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/TB/AnnualMeeting/JointStatementChairsMeetingMay2013.doc (accessed 12.01.2018).

targets are impressive in many respects. The 3–year global consultation with a wide spectrum of stakeholders from around the globe was, as the Secretary-General stated, unprecedented.

Such transparency and participation in the development of global policy meaningfully addressed serious concerns with the selection of the MDG goals and targets. Furthermore, the goals and targets do not propose half measures, such as halving those who live in poverty or halving those suffering from hunger. Instead, consistent with international human rights obligations, they aim to end all poverty in all its dimensions[11].

In this respect, the goals and targets are universal. They are also universal because they are applicable to all countries, not just to developing countries, as poverty and hunger are problems in both high- and low-income countries[12].

The SDGs also address the concerns of the human rights community that the MDGs failed to align with the principles of equality and nondiscrimination. Still, the opportunity to fully ground the 2030 development agenda in the international human rights framework, entrenching human rights principles and standards in a global strategy for development was sadly lost.

The goals are not framed in terms of international human rights standards, the targets – with few exceptions – do not link to international human rights mechanisms for accountability, and the indicators are to be selected by a group of technical experts working behind closed doors. In the end, governments, international organizations, civil society, and funders will be working to make progress on these indicators, which have not been part of the global consultation.

Issues of sustainable development of organizations are analyzed by scientists in various fields and in different contexts, highlighting the socially responsible role of stakeholders and the need to apply modern management methods and technologies to address these issues. Changes in a global environment inevitably lead to sustainability and responsibility, therefore management concepts inevitably change and overlap, are filled up with one or other problem that is under consideration. Susana Nascimento and Alexandre Pólvora state, that the complexity of issues concerning sustainability is increasingly carrying us from interdisciplinary appeals to transdisciplinary modes of knowledge and practice. The need to address simultaneously environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainability has called attention to the crucial role of social sciences in working with other experts and engaging relevant stakeholders within this transdisciplinary scenario[13].

In joint work involving designers, sociologists, engineers, anthropologists,

[11] *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda...* (accessed 12.01.2018).

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[13] S. Nascimento, A. Pólvora, *Social sciences in the transdisciplinary making of sustainable artifacts*, "Social Science Information" 2016, № 55(1), p. 28-42.

architects, artisans, geographers, tinkers, citizens and communities, the general effort lies in integrating as many sustainability tokens as possible in our objects, such as direct connections to the needs of users, adoption of cradle-to-cradle cycles, respect for cultural beliefs and ethical norms, employment of renewable energy sources and materials, democratic and balanced engagement of stakeholders, energy efficiency, local and convivial creation, distribution and use, simplification of repair and maintenance tasks, attention to intended and unintended political consequences of artifacts, or any other guidelines that make artifacts more sustainable[14].

Scientific achievements and their application are important for solving the challenges of the future. It is offered to examine how institutions governing research and education live up to the "huge onus" placed upon them to help societies alter their own practices and "tackle, as a priority, this 'wickedest' of problems-how to re-found human civilization in a way that is sustainable into the longest of terms"[15].

The role of researchers in ensuring sustainable development was defined by Paul J. Crutzen stating that mankind will remain a major environmental force for many millennia. A daunting task lies ahead for scientists and engineers to guide society towards environmentally sustainable management during the era of the Anthropocene. This will require appropriate human behavior at all scales, and may well involve internationally accepted, large-scale geo-engineering projects for instance to optimize climate[16].

Sustainable development can be seen as a political vision underpinned by the theory of ecological modernization.

This implies four main principles:

1. First, modern science and technology is important for ecologizing the economy.
2. There is no inherent conflict between the economy and the environment, hence market instruments should be harnessed for sustainable development by internalizing externalities-economizing ecology.
3. The role of the state ought to change to become more proactive in mobilizing private actors to take initiative, such as corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility depends on two distinct stylized facts concerning régulation and power.
4. The first-institutional CSR-is institutional in nature, the other-strategic CSR-is economic and productive. The former permits and stabilizes the latter, which in turn gives rise to political compromises structuring institutional mechanisms.

[14] Ibidem.

[15] M. Lahsen, *Toward a Sustainable Future Earth: Challenges for a Research*, "Science, Technology & Human Values" 2016, № 41(5), p. 876-898; S. Parkin, *Leadership for Sustainability: The Search for Tipping Points. In Addressing Tipping Points for a Precarious Future*, "Oxford University Press" 2013, p. 194-212.

[16] P.J. Crutzen, *Geology of mankind*, „Nature. International Journal of Science" 2002, № 415, p. 23.

5. Social movements should change from watchdogs to active participants in sustainable development. In essence, the theory of ecological modernization has developed in tandem with neoliberal ideology resulting in what several scholars call green neoliberalism.[17]

Gregory Borne claims that the increasing integration of sustainable development into governance structures as well as its proliferation in many other areas of human and environmental interaction require a closer scrutiny of what the term means and how it is being implemented. Is a deft of research that directly attempts to address sustainable development discourse sand in that case, as such there is a significant lack of guidance on how such a complex and ambiguous topic should be tackled from a methodological perspective[18].

Research over the past decade into sustainable entrepreneurship has focused on its contribution to the sustainability transformation of markets and society.

Particularities of the business models of sustainable niche market pioneers have been identified in earlier research, but there is a lack of knowledge about the dynamic role of business models and their innovation as well as the challenges of business model innovation for incumbents who aim at upgrading the sustainability of their conventional business models.

Looking at the challenges to business model innovation and the possible sustainability transformation pathways of small and large entrepreneurs reveals that more studies of co-evolution are needed. Further empirical and conceptual research investigating the interplay of sustainability[19].

A sustainable organization is not an automatic phenomenon and it is necessary to create the right conditions for its implementation, first of all, identifying the factors of sustainable initiatives in the organization, the management system promoting and supporting them, and continuously develop and improve these factors. The sustainability of the organization depends on the conditions created in the organization, the development of management system actions[20] and social and technological innovations in pursuance of socially responsible activities.

According to Antony Upward and Peter Jones, business is increasingly employing sustainability practices, aiming to improve environmental and social responsibility while maintaining and improving profitability. For many or-

[17] L. Olsson, J.C. Hourcade, J. Kohler, *Sustainable Development*, "Journal of Environment & Development" 2014, № 23(1), p. 3-14.

[18] G. Borne, *Exploring Discourses of Sustainable development: A Flexible Framework*, "Methological Innovations Online" 2013, № 8(2), p. 90-106.

[19] S. Schaltegger, F. Lüdeke-Freund, G. Hansen, *Business Models for Sustainability: Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Transformation*, "Organization & Environment" 2016, № 29(3), p. 264-289.

[20] Z.O. Atkočiūnienė, *Žinių vadyba ir organizacijos darna: konkurencinio pranašumo aspektas*, "Elektroninis mokymasis, informacija ir komunikacija: teorija ir praktika" 2013, № 1, p. 15-27.

ganizations, profit-oriented business models are a major constraint impeding progress in sustainability. Today organizations typically do not define their underpinning values associated with their definition of success nor measure their operations and outcomes against our definition of a successful strong sustainability business.

The position of "strongly sustainable" and identifying the "possibility for flourishing" as a legitimate business goal signifies a holistic and perhaps radical turn for business (and society).

It requires all stakeholders, including managers, to advance a shift towards a collective normative definition of business success appropriate to their local circumstances and shared worldviews.

To be useful, any instruments for structuring and deploying the required business models must be conceptually and normatively compatible with all the knowledge we have introduced. Stakeholders (including managers) cannot be expected to learn the large body of scientific knowledge that describes and validates claims of strong sustainability. Stakeholders, including leaders and managers, will be motivated by the moral argument and the practical benefits (including improved financial viability as environmental and social constraints impinge on "business as usual").[21]

Strongly sustainable business ontology model proposed by A. Upward and P. Jones in practice can help individual businesses and the entire system of business, including government, educators, more towards outcomes suggested as required to maintain/restore conditions conducive to human health and desirable to sustain the possibility for flourishing of all life.

This is achieved by explicitly attempting compatibility with current credentialed knowledge from natural and social science rather than current social convention.

As more organizations in different sectors and marketplaces implement business models aligned with this definition of success, the probability of sustaining the possibility for flourishing is greatly increased. For each of us, and indeed for all life, the likelihood of flourishing, now and in the future, depends on our ability to innovate in response to new and changed circumstances, where these circumstances are largely shaped by the unintended consequences of our own individual and collective behavior.

Human organizations, particularly businesses, are central in generating these circumstances and in creating the innovation required to take definitive, highly leveraged actions to sustain the possibility for the flourishing of human and other life on this planet forever.

The concept of social responsibility is directly linked and understood as the commitment of organizations to pursue a sustainable business, meeting not

[21] A. Upward, P. Jones, *Reprints and permissions: Sustainable Business Models*, "Organization & Environment" 2016, № 29(1), p. 97-123.

only their economic goals, but also taking into account the society (see table 1).

Tab. 2. *Basic elements of social responsibility*

Economic	Social	Environmental
Cost-effective business – profitability. Competitive goods and services. Management effectiveness. Non- transfer of the costs of your activities to other interested parties. Saving energy and energy-dissipation production elements. Financial risk management.	Caring for welfare of employees, ensuring work safety (psychological health at work). Support for staff development and motivation system. Implementation of the system of participation in decision-making. Supporting a fair dialogue with company employees. Consumer information. Promotion of cooperation with neighbours. Caring for the needs of society.	Knowledge and integral following of environmental legislation. Knowledge of the impact on the environment made by business activities (use of raw materials, environmental pollution). Ecological risk management, reduction of pollution. Constant monitoring and compliance of nature-friendly performance indicators, improvement of all business operations. Identifying the required changes and their compliance.

Source: R. Čiegis, R. Norkutė, *Lietuvos bankų socialinė atsakomybė darnaus vystymosi kontekste*, "Organizacijų vadyba: sisteminiai tyrimai" 2012, № 63, p. 19-33.

According to scientists, it is necessary to maintain a balance among these three elements by promoting ethical, environmental, social responsibility and ensuring the sustainable development of the organization. Social responsibility initiatives are implemented in the following areas:

1. Social responsibility in the workplace: safe and healthy workplaces for employees, the promotion of employees' awareness in this field; respect for human rights and their protection in the workplace, provision of equal work conditions for representatives of various social groups; creation of opportunities for employees for lifelong learning, self-improvement and improving others;
2. Social responsibility in society and in the community: listening to the local community needs, the reconciliation of the interests of the community and the company in a mutually beneficial way; philanthropy and voluntary participation in community and society activities and initiatives; promotion of the involvement of young people in business and professional activities, knowledge transfer and the provision of opportunities for practice;
3. Social responsibility in the environment: effective and responsible use of resources in the company's activities; the environmental protection and redevelopment of neglected areas through the development of activities;

creation and production of "green" products (suitable for processing, consuming less resources in the production process, promoting more efficient use of energy and other resources);

4. Social responsibility in the market: dutiful payments based on received accounts; socially responsible marketing, not exploiting the weaknesses of individual social groups; safe products, taking into account the needs of specific individual groups (handicapped people, the youth).

Conclusion

To sum up, sustainable development of the organization is a reciprocal benefit provided both to the organization that creates and develops its business and to the community (society). The coherence of all economic activities performers helps to avoid the severe economic and ecological consequences. The preconditions of a sustainable development of the organization is based on the promotion of a volatile approach and behavior in social, environmental and economic aspects: the desire to secure prosperity and take responsibility, giving others the opportunity to secure development and prosperity both now and in the future.

Sustainable development can be defined as the development philosophy based on systematic thinking, the essence of which is the fundamental laws of nature which should not be violated by a human in order to ensure the sustainability of the system and human continuity on this planet, while ensuring social justice and economic prosperity.

The evolution of the concept of sustainable development, in the base of which is the approval of the social responsibility of managers is disclosed.

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