

УДК: 338.45: 659.2: 338.2 (478)

*Stoian Eugeniu,
PhD student, Assistant Professor,
ASEM, Chişinău, str. Bănulescu-Bodoni 61*

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVES BASED COMPANY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA MOLDCELL SA

Abstract. In recent years, the awareness of companies in Moldova of their role in social development has grown significantly, evidenced by the establishment of the Global Compact Moldova (GPM) network and the joining of a growing number of companies to it. Although philanthropy is well rooted in Moldovan business culture, the adoption and implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices is still in its infancy. The traditional relationship between the state and the private sector, where companies are often 'asked' to donate, contributes to this situation, with companies perceiving philanthropy as an unofficial 'tax'. The case study on Moldcell shows how the company has integrated CSR values into its strategy, contributing to the development of information infrastructure and supporting social, cultural and environmental phenomena in Moldova. Moldcell, a member of the Global Compact Network in Moldova since 2006, promotes sustainable development and believes that ethical and transparent business is the key to the prosperity of the sector and the country.

Key words: corporate responsibility, government, companies, Moldcell Joint Stock Company, corporate responsibility programs.

Introduction. In Moldova the last few years have been marked by the growing awareness of companies about their role in social development. The establishment of the Global Compact Moldova (PGM) network, as well as the increase in the number of companies that have joined PGM is a proof of this. While philanthropy is already deeply rooted in the Moldovan business culture, most companies still have a long way to go before adopting and implementing CSR practices [9]. The prevalence of philanthropic practices relative to CSR practices is partly explained by the relationship between the state and the private sector established over the last 20 years. Thus, companies have traditionally been 'asked' to donate to various projects prioritized by central and local public authorities and, as a result, economic agents have come to perceive philanthropy as a 'tax' they pay to society for the business they do [8].

At the other pole, the Government has enough tools to boost the practice of CSR at company level, but so far has not used them. The lack of enthusiasm shown by the Moldovan authorities is due to an obscure perception of the concept of CSR and, in particular, of the potential benefits deriving from its implementation. Successful international practices applied in developed countries demonstrate the synergetic effect and long-term macroeconomic benefits associated with CSR. However, in a business environment characterized by a relatively low degree of CSR, such as Moldova, the role of the state becomes crucial. In order to change the current state of affairs, Moldovan companies need an impetus, which can also come from public authorities. The government can act as a catalyst and can use a range of regulatory, facilitation,

intermediation and merit recognition tools for companies that are already socially responsible [9].

CSR in Moldova. Local experts say geography and history can explain a lot about the social responsibility of Moldovan companies. Moldova has a tumultuous history that includes both tragic periods and economic and social progress, both imprinted in the collective memory. The analysis of the Soviet period is the most relevant in the context of this report, as many factors influencing business conduct are rooted in institutions and attitudes that descend from those times. Economic analysts argue that many local representatives of Moldovan business manage their companies and sell their products on the basis of «managerial skills» that they have learned since they were «red managers». However, it should also be mentioned that the number of Moldovan managers who have a modern approach to business is also steadily increasing, and this is a trend that will encourage social responsibility in the future [9].

On the positive balance of the history of the Soviet period it is worth mentioning the substantial investments allocated to Moldova by the ‘center’. A sophisticated and universal system of social guarantees and state mechanisms was designed to meet social needs. There was no open unemployment and wages hardly correlated with individual worker productivity. Labor protection standards were generally respected. Employees enjoyed not only stable wages, but also a number of non-wage rewards [9].

Research methodology. Moldcell entered the Moldovan market in 2000, becoming one of the main players and positively influencing the development of the country’s information infrastructure. The company has boosted the launch of telecom-related business areas and made significant contributions to the state budget. It has also responsibly addressed the social phenomena facing the country’s population and supported cultural heritage and local values.

For Moldcell, being in the lead means being accountable to its customers, shareholders, partners and the community in which it operates. Telecommunications play a crucial role in the economic development of a country, facilitating access to information, reducing costs and increasing the efficiency of communication, which leads to the progress of society as a whole.

The company believes in the values of sustainable business development, based on ethics and transparency, and believes that it can contribute to creating a world of more opportunities. That is why it has integrated the values of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) into its development and business strategy [1]. Moldcell is convinced that only compliance and the promotion of fair business will lead to the prosperity of the sector and the country in which it operates. The company uses technology to benefit the community, initiating social partnerships in key areas such as education and health, supporting local culture and art, and taking a clear pro-environmental stance.

Research results. Since 2006, Moldcell has been part of the Global Compact Network in Moldova, the largest corporate social responsibility initiative in the world, launched and promoted under the aegis of the United Nations.

We will represent the directions in which Moldcell implements and gets involved in solving social issues [10]:

1. Moldcell Academy

The Moldcell Academy project continued to be a success in 2022. In the second edition of the program, 15 participants completed the 7-month internship and received graduation diplomas. We are proud to have selected 6 of these graduates who chose to stay at Moldcell Group and work in various departments. The project aims to support creative students and guide them through their careers. During the internship, students will benefit from a paid internship program and valuable training experience.

Moldcell Group is the first and only private company in the Republic of Moldova to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the promotion of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Goal № 4, «Quality Education» is a priority for both Moldcell Group and Moldcell Foundation.

2. Digital Skills Connect Generations Program

The program, also known as #LikeDeLaBuna, aims to promote active ageing and support the social and digital inclusion of older people with the help of young people. Funded by the Moldcell Foundation, the United Nations Population Fund Moldova (UNFPA Moldova), the Czech Republic and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the program is implemented by HelpAge International Moldova in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova.

Over the past two years, the initiative has gained popularity among both older people and young volunteers. The program has been steadily expanding and is now in its third phase:

Phase I (2020): 200 elderly people were helped to overcome social isolation by learning advanced technologies with the support of 50 young volunteers.

Phase II (2021): 100 more women and men over 60 received smartphones and were trained by groups of 25 young volunteers in their use.

Phase III (2022): In April 2022, the program expanded nationwide, involving 200 seniors and 75 volunteers from various villages and cities across Moldova.

3. Digital skills connect generations

The Digital Skills Development Program was showcased at the Older People in Emergencies poster exhibition at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2022 – MIPPA+20, held in Rome, Italy, from 16–17 June 2022.

The programme was praised as innovative in concept and strategy, addressing not only the health and social protection of the most marginalized population groups, but also facilitating intergenerational solidarity by mobilizing young people for community support. The project is human rights based, with a special focus on active participation of rights holders, integrated through innovation and partnerships.

The «Digital Skills Connect Generations» project is funded by the Moldcell Foundation, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) of Moldova, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Moldova and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Chisinau. The implementation is carried out by HelpAge International in Moldova, in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Moldova, and is taking place in 26 rural localities.

4. Digital inclusion for social services and e-health

Moldcell Group is a human digital operator pioneering innovations in digital health services for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. In September 2022, Moldcell Group, UNFPA Moldova and the Future Technologies Activity (FTA), funded by USAID and Sweden, announced the launch of a pilot project entitled «Digital Inclusion for Social Services and e-Health».

The project will leverage the Moldcell Group's mobile and digital networks, as well as a successful UNFPA and FTA project, for the digital inclusion of older people through intergenerational dialog with local and international stakeholders, aiming to integrate digital technologies across sectors and businesses.

E-Health is a fast growing field at the intersection of information technologies, health informatics, public health and business. The growth in demand and supply of e-health and telemedicine services was initially spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued thereafter, being perceived as an opportunity for modernization of the health sector that Moldova will capitalize on in the coming years.

The pilot project initiated by the Moldcell Group, UNFPA Moldova and FTA provided access to primary counseling and advisory services to 630 elderly people through donated mobile phones. The program «Digital Skills that Connect».

5. Non-discrimination and inclusion of every child

In the summer of 2022, Moldcell Foundation, UNICEF Moldova and Artcor organized two creative summer camps for children under the title «Reimagine your future!». The participants were 20 children from Ukraine and Moldova.

At the first camp, children explored various artistic techniques, including self-portrait, painting on glass, textiles, gradient and fluorescent colors. The second camp focused on creating a book integrating storytelling and animation techniques. In these activities, children expressed their feelings about global challenges and painted the world they want to live in. Their ideas ranged from a magic button that would stop global conflicts to a time machine that would take them into the future, revealing their inner perspectives.

Participants were delighted with the camps, the mentors, the location and the atmosphere created, and also appreciated the new skills they learned. The project was implemented by the Moldcell Foundation, UNICEF Moldova and Artcor, as part of the community integration camp for Ukrainian refugees from Ukraine.

World Children's Day is a Global Day of Action for children, celebrated every year on November 20, in memory of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The aim of this day is to draw attention to the critical issues facing children and to advocate for their involvement as advocates for their own rights. Regardless of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or other status, every child has the right to feel valued, included and protected from all forms of discrimination [10].

In 2022, Moldcell Group actively participated in UNICEF Moldova's initiatives under the main theme «Nondiscrimination and inclusion of every child», including the #KidsTakeOver campaign. Child beneficiaries of the projects implemented by UNICEF in Moldova «took the power» over Moldcell Group, having the opportunity to voice their opinions and be heard.

6. Social entrepreneurship and young people in Moldova for a more inclusive, sustainable and innovative society

Every enterprise can have a positive social impact. One of Moldcell Foundation's priorities is to promote sustainable business for the benefit of society. Young people are encouraged to start their own businesses in their communities, helping to create new jobs and improve economic growth through the production or provision of various services. This initiative also provides valuable opportunities for exploring the creative potential of young people.

In February 2022, Moldcell Foundation entered into a partnership with the Public Association of Legal Culture Henri Capitant Moldova to co-finance the project «Social Entrepreneurship and Moldovan Youth for a more inclusive, sustainable and innovative society», known as GoYouth+.

During 2022, the GoYouth+ project organized 3 social entrepreneurship schools in the regions of Hâncești, Causeni and Dubasari to support rural youth who are unemployed or not attending any educational program.

In these schools, participants benefited from the expertise of top professionals in various fields, including law, accounting, intellectual property, marketing, human resources and business. From the initial business idea to budget management, staff recruitment, promotion and marketing strategies, young people learned all about how to start and run a social enterprise. They also undertook study visits to local businesses to understand business practices and challenges and how to combine profitability with sustainable business principles [10].

7. Help for Ukraine

Moldcell Group is dedicated to supporting those in need and recognizes the critical importance of communication in emergency situations. In the context of the crisis in the neighboring country, Moldcell Group has provided full support to ensure communication for Moldovan citizens in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in Moldova.

Moldcell Group's actions in support of Ukrainian refugees:

Moldcell Group distributed free of charge Moldcell prepaid SIM cards at the Single Crisis Management Center in Moldexpo Center and provided them to Ukrainian refugees when crossing the border into Moldova.

Free Wi-Fi was provided at the Moldexpo placement center and dedicated phone lines were installed for refugees' needs.

In an emergency initiative, the Moldcell Group facilitated free roaming for operators in the neighboring country, allowing them to offer special rates to their refugee subscribers in Moldova to keep in touch with their families.

Free roaming packages were offered to Moldovan citizens in Ukraine.

These actions demonstrate Moldcell Group's commitment to supporting the communities affected by the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, ensuring access to communication and supporting the urgent needs of refugees in these difficult times [10].

Conclusions. The study carried out on the concept of corporate social responsibility confirms the relevance of using its principles as a necessary element for

setting strategic business objectives in modern society. Responsibility as a norm of behavior is determined by external rules, generally accepted requirements and internal moral attitudes, values. Compulsory (according to Carroll's economic and legal level) and voluntary (ethical and philanthropic) responsibility determine the norms of relations between business and society. Thus, the justification of corporate social responsibility primarily to stakeholders determines economic efficiency for business and contributes to the development of local communities, and the requirements for business enshrined in law ensure environmental conservation. Therefore, the relevance, social significance and high role of CSR's contribution to the implementation of the concept of sustainable development are indisputable. Moldcell does not limit itself only to providing telecommunication services but is actively engaged in community development in the Republic of Moldova. Through projects such as «Education for All», the company contributes to improving access to pre-school education for children from disadvantaged families, underlining its concern for their future and well-being. The voluntary involvement of employees in kindergarten renovations and the organization of community events underlines Moldcell's commitment to the needs and aspirations of the local community. These actions not only support social projects but also promote a culture of responsibility and solidarity among employees and the community at large. Moldcell emphasizes a firm commitment to the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by integrating them into its business strategy and daily activities. By promoting a pro-environmental corporate culture and implementing resource-efficient policies, Moldcell demonstrates its concern for protecting the environment and supporting sustainable development. Moldcell's active participation in social campaigns and projects, such as supporting seriously ill children through monthly donations and promoting pre-school education in rural areas, reflects the company's responsibility and sensitivity to the urgent needs of the community. Partnerships with governmental and international organizations, such as the Ministry of Education and the World Bank, demonstrate the company's ability to collaborate effectively to bring positive and sustainable change in the community. Therefore, Moldcell not only honors its commitment to its customers by providing quality services, but also contributes to the social and educational development of society, thus strengthening its role as a responsible and active player in the community in which it operates. In final conclusions we can mention one thing, that Moldcell's sustained commitment to promoting social welfare and corporate responsibility not only strengthens its position in the market, but also contributes to building a more equitable and sustainable society in the Republic of Moldova.

References

1. Campbell J. L. Institutional Analysis and the Paradox of Corporate Social Responsibility. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 2006. Vol. 49(7). P. 925–938.
2. Campbell J. L. Why Would Corporations Behave in Social Responsible Way? An Institutional Theory of Corporate Social Responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*. 2007. Vol. 32(3). P. 946–967.
3. Carroll A. B. A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance. *Academy of Management Review*. 1979. Vol. 4(4). P. 497–505.
4. Carroll A. B. The Four Faces of Corporate Citizenship. *Business and Society Review*. 1998. Vol. 100/101. P. 1–7.
5. Carroll A. B. The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*. 1991. Vol. 34(4). P. 39–48.
6. Cassel G., McCabe J. *The Theory of Social Economy*. 2 vols. London: T. F. Unwin, 1923. Vol. 1. 364 p.
7. Center for Corporate citizenship (Boston College, Carroll school of management). URL: <http://www.bcccc.net/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=567&parentID=473>
8. Responsabilitatea socială corporativă în republica Moldova; Microsoft Word – CSR final. URL: expert-grup.org
9. Evaluarea Responsabilității Sociale Corporative în Moldova. Evaluarea Responsabilității Sociale Corporative în Moldova United Nations Development Programme. URL: undp.org
10. Responsabilitatea socială în cadrul companiei S. A. Moldcell. URL: <https://www.moldcell.md/rom/responsabilitate-social%C4%83>

