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# **SOCIAL TEACHING AS ONE OF THE SOURCES OF FORMING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS**

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## **Abstract**

The article deals with the relationship between Economics as a science, corporate social responsibility and the social doctrine of the Church. Social work has a permanent place in the social doctrine of the Church. It is ready to face new challenges, which entails the development of a new cultural aspect that influences the development of man and society. Track the meaning and purpose of social world work is obvious. If we want to highlight the achievements of this work, it is good to think about the primary motivation or inspiration for this challenging and at the same time beneficial activities. Church pushes to institutionalize the care of widows and orphans, the sick, the socially excluded people throughout its existence.

*Keywords:* economics, society, church, social science, social work

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*Marketing is the matter of disseminating of thoughts and disseminating of thoughts is the most significant product of our civilization.*  
(Seth Godin)

## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays and in the near future, we can expect, even in the economic life, many more risks and insecurities stemming not only from globalization processes, new breakthrough technologies and dynamizing and innovation processes, but also from the shakeouts resulting from the turbulences on markets. In particular, at a time of increasing competition, some marketing principles as well as marketing itself, especially the importance and structure of its instruments, must change.

## **2. Socially responsible business**

In this period, businesses often concentrate only on their survival. Every day they have to deal with cost reduction and implementation of risk elimination measures, while new strategies, which should require new quality focusing on

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technological progress, information technologies, innovation and competitive advantage searching, are necessary and they should create, also by means of socially responsible business, conditions for sustainable development. In this respect, the transition from traditional to a new economy based on knowledge and innovations will be important.

One of the most decisive characteristics of modern democratic societies is also the social responsibility raising and development in all areas of human activities. The fundamental instrument for coping with the consequences of the financial and economic crisis is the socially responsible business. An interesting definition of socially responsible business was submitted by the Norwegian economist Alexander Dahlsrud who characterizes it as: "a continuous commitment to behave ethically and to contribute to economically sustainable growth while promoting improvement of the quality of lives of employees and their families, as well as of local community and the society as a whole" [1].

At the same time, social responsibility creates the prerequisites for sustainable development by investing in human capital and creates the prerequisites for formation and development of knowledge economy in the knowledge society. Social responsibility needs to be applied not only in the field of production, services or in business in general, but also in all industries of human consumption. Mentioning the area of human consumption, we can mention that this starts to be also applied in the area of education. At least this is a conclusion of the international scientific conference of University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius and its Faculty of Mass Media Communication on socially responsible business, which dealt with the issues of social responsibility on educational institutions at both primary and secondary schools level and at the university level (6–7 November 2012). In general, social responsibility is demonstrated in these areas:

- Economic – this area includes, in the sense of social responsibility, for example, the fact that the organization and its employees avoid corruption and they behave ethically; it involves the way of administration and management of the organization, credibility and transparency, relations with customers and suppliers, behaviour towards owners and shareholders;
- Social – this area is related mainly to the care of the organization about its employees and to the creation of adequate working conditions; this involves e.g. human capital development – it supports upgrading of qualifications and education; employment policies, healthy corporate culture, etc.;
- Environment – this area of social responsibility is focused especially on the elimination of negative impacts on the environment, creation of ecological policy of the company, allocation of investments into ecological technologies, monitoring of the impact on the environment, protection of natural resources, waste management, etc.

The main principles of social responsibility include, amongst others, responsibility of businesses towards the society and the commitment of businesses to contribute to the development of the quality of life. Social responsibility represents the ethical imperative in favour of the society. Socially

responsible business should be interested in what happens in its surroundings and should make the permanent effort to minimize social, ethical and environmental risks and to look for sustainable solutions. All these activities should focus on and contribute to the health of the surrounding society and to the overall social well-being.

Important factors for implementation of social responsibility are sponsorship and philanthropy.

Corporate philanthropy is a very broad notion which can shelter a whole range of diverse activities and behaviour which lead to conscious support of other persons or non-profit organizations. The common objective of such activities is, first of all, the effort to contribute to the higher quality of life of both individuals and society as a whole, or the effort to increase public well-being and to make efforts to help in building and preserving certain values in the society. According to Majchrák and Marošiová: "The modern form of donorship helps to solve problems of the society and individuals by supporting such areas as education, innovations and development of skills of individuals – so that they are able to help themselves on their own" [2]

Companies dealing with philanthropy for a long time often try to build long-term and solid partnerships, especially with non-profit organizations. Such developed cooperation between companies and non-profit organizations is the sign of the well-functioning civil society in developed countries and it allows doing good things in a common, meaningful and organized manner.

The notion 'philanthropy' is sometimes mistaken with corporate sponsorship. In contrast to sponsorship, corporate philanthropy does not expect any counter-value for its voluntary philanthropic activities. We distinguish between a proactive approach and a reactive approach of the company to donorship. In the case of the reactive approach the company does not have any developed donorship strategy. If the company has a developed donorship strategy (proactive approach) which clearly defines specific areas and rules according to which it allocates its contributions, it is beneficial for such company in various aspects, depending on the area of donorship to which the company wants to dedicate. In the case of the proactive approach we can speak also about the so-called 'strategic philanthropy'.

Socially responsible business also means to sustain and develop economy, to be economically successful and also to gain the competition advantage for the company by means of a good reputation and good ethical, social, cultural and environmental behaviour in all areas of its activity. At the same time, increasing of credibility and building of a good reputation will contribute to the increase of its brand value, market shares and loyalty of its customers. In addition, it is necessary to realize that socially responsible business is rather the economic necessity having the direct impact on business results than the mere issue of image.

As regards socially responsible business, dealing with the interaction between socially responsible business and sustainable development, especially with respect to healthy development of economy and society in the future, is a

very important matter. In this context, it is necessary to ensure the appropriate tempo, quality of economic growth, more effective use of energy resources as well as rational decision-making related to solving of economic and environmental problems.

### **3. Importance of volunteering in social responsibility**

Volunteering makes part of activities in the area of philanthropy. The principle of volunteering lies in the fact that socially responsible companies voluntarily carry out activities and accept commitments which are over and above their obligations defined by law. They behave in this way because of their inner conviction and not because they are obliged by law to do so.

In developed countries companies offer to their employees a whole range of possibilities related to their voluntary participation. Corporate volunteering can be divided into two categories:

- Corporate volunteering initiated and conducted by employees – the company can support their activities indirectly, e.g. by flexible working hours or by using company background;
- Volunteering organized by a company – e.g. employees, during their working hours, go to a certain non-profit organization to help there for one day.

Topicality of the volunteering issue as a part of social responsible business is confirmed by various professional publications in the area of management of volunteers in organizations and manuals and guides related to various aspects of methodology of work with volunteers [3]. The interest of organizations has been focused also on the improvement of professionalization of work with volunteers in recent years. Many organizations which have been working with volunteers for a long time have currently the developed systems of work, from their recruitment, selection, guidance, appreciation to supervision. Volunteering starts to be an element of organization management.

Activities of the volunteering organization are built mostly on volunteers and their work. "A volunteer is a person who, without demanding financial compensation, provides his/her time, energy, knowledge and skills in favour of other people or the society". [3, p. 35] In majority of cases, they are non-profit organizations which try to promote rights of minorities and to satisfy individual needs of citizens. Thanks to their initiative, these organizations manage to evoke many changes in the society. The highest number of volunteers works in social, cultural, environmental, health, educational and sport areas.

Volunteering is a significant expression of civil participation in the state of society. Volunteers express their interest in participation in solving of the problems of the society as a whole as well as the local and regional problems, and their willingness to help others. The pillar of volunteering is a vision and determination of people to do something for others, for their communities and for the whole society and thus contribute to better quality of life. Volunteering is

a phenomenon which first and foremost merits esteem and appreciation by the society.

The support of volunteering should be one of the principal priorities of a democratic country. The importance of volunteering is irreplaceable, whether in the field of social services and healthcare, or in other fields, e.g. education. The benefit of volunteering can be observed both at societal and individual level.

Volunteering brings a double benefit – it brings a benefit to a volunteer as well as to a person who receives help. It also enriches interpersonal relations and brings new experience for both parties concerned. This activity is most used in the third sector – non-profit organizations and civil associations. More attention to volunteering should be paid by media and within the educational process at secondary schools and universities. One of the instruments of socially responsible business in the social area is social marketing.

#### **4. Social marketing**

Many social and health problems stem from the character of individuals behaviour. Alcoholism, smoking of children and youth, drunken driving, domestic violence, unhealthy diet – all these problems arise from voluntary decision-making of individuals to act in a certain way which either damage themselves or the whole society. Also the civilization diseases, traffic accidents and racism are the results of everyday voluntary activities.

Social marketing provides instruments for resolving these problems and it also offers a big possibility to influence not only the behaviour and approaches of individuals but also of legislators and influential lobbies. Social marketing workers can focus also on media, organizations and other decision-making subjects in the society, including governments. Social marketing includes the change of deeply-rooted opinions and approaches as well as the complex change of economic, social and political environment, often with very limited means. While the main objective of marketing is to satisfy the expectations of owners or participating groups, social marketing must satisfy the need of the society to improve the quality of life.

Social marketing represents the separate marketing discipline which is covered by this term since early 1970s. It denotes mainly the effort concentrated on influencing behaviour that will improve the health condition, avoid accidents, protect the environment and contribute to the quality of life in communities [4].

Social marketing has its roots in the commercial sector – in the commercial marketing. Sixty years ago the American academic Wiebe encouraged people to think in such a way, when he analyzed social advertising campaigns and drew attention to the fact that the best ones were those which imitated their commercial partners. He raised the rhetorical question in his article: “Why cannot we sell brotherhood and rational thinking like the soap?” [5] He assumed that the success of mass persuasion depended on five factors (requirements):

1. strong motivation of the audience (this motivation must be combined with the individual predisposition to the target),
2. clear instructions where and how to achieve social mechanism,
3. implementing social mechanism,
4. adequate and compatible mechanism facilitating the application of required behaviour, and
5. psychically and physically accessible social mechanism.

In 1971 the authors Kotler and Zaltman firstly used the term ‘social marketing’ in Journal of Marketing in their article ‘Social Marketing: Approach to Planned Social Changes’ and they defined it as: “*Proposal, implementation and control of the program whose objective is to influence acceptability of social thoughts and which involves reflections on product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research*” [6].

Like in the case of the marketing definition, many definitions were gradually formulated also for social marketing characterizing the social marketing as: “application of technologies of commercial marketing for analysis, planning, performance and evaluation of programs proposed for influencing voluntary behaviour of target groups for the purposes of improvement of both their personal well-being and the well-being of the society” [7].

Kotler and Lee define social marketing as: “*a process applying principles and techniques of marketing in order to create, communicate and provide the value for the purposes of influencing the behaviour of a target group, which brings benefits to the society (public healthcare, security, environment and communities) as well as to the target group*” [5, p. 13].

It results from the above-mentioned, that social marketing is about influencing behaviour and using traditional marketing principles and techniques and it is mostly the activity of non-profit organizations and public agencies.

Socially responsible business in all its areas (economic, social and environmental) and social marketing could not function without the corresponding level of morality in the society which is sustained by the Church and its Christian mission and teaching. The highest criterion is not the maximum profit but the social character of material and spiritual good. The role of the Church is to announce moral principles anywhere and anytime, also with respect to the social order, and to express opinions on any human facts. The Church influences each part of our lives, from money to morality, from politics to art.

## **5. Social teaching of the Church**

Social teaching of the Church is a normative science which focuses on the human society, its life, character and organization; on the basis of the Christian order of redemption it sets up principles, norms and tasks for specific historical conditions of a given society. In contrast to Sociology, Catholic social teaching has a normative character. In coping with social issues it determines and applies norms and it tries to create the fair and social order which is in accordance with the God’s law.

The objective of social teaching of the Church is to formulate ethical and moral principals for the social and economic life, based on God's revelation and natural law.

Social teaching of the Church is open to the truth and it accepts it, whatever is the knowledge it comes from [Pápežská rada Iustitia et pax, *Kompendium sociálnej náuky Cirkvi*, 76]. The pope Benedict XVI writes in his encyclical Caritas in Veritate: "Social teaching of the Church which has "an important interdisciplinary dimension", can play extremely efficient role. It allows the faith, theology, metaphysics and science to find their place within cooperation in the service to the man. Especially here, social teaching of the Church applies its sapiential dimension." [Benedikt XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, 43] "Social teaching of the Church as a whole makes comments on the situations of a human life so that the man could live his life in accordance with his dignity which he has as a God's child and heir to the paradise and so that he could always be worth of the eternal life. It is actually the ethical system of the Christian life or, better said, the system of life through the prism of the Catholic morality. It deals with all aspects of human life in the interaction with the life of the society, therefore the scope of the Catholic social teaching itself is as broad as the life of the man and of the society." [8] If we want to go further, we have to clarify the notion of Catholic social teaching. "Catholic social teaching is defined as a notion which includes social teaching of the Church and Catholic social teaching in the broader sense. From this point of view, social teaching of the Church is understood as a 'binding' proclamation of a Church office which can be issued, besides the Pope (encyclicals), also by a council or even by bishops or bishop conferences for a certain diocese (territory). Social teaching of the Church is then the basis for more broadly understood Catholic social teaching based on knowledge in the area of Economic sciences, Humanities and Social sciences. It is usually the combination of Moral theology and Social philosophy, while social teaching (also in the narrower church understanding) is since its creation bound with Christian anthropology, or it even makes part of it." [9] Social teaching of the Church is aware of man's value and dignity and by means of its provisions tries to create the space for realization of the human life dignity. Combining economy and ethics, the objectives of socially responsible marketing can be achieved, too.

Interconnection between economy and ethics needs to be perceived in the context of personalism of social teaching of the Church. Till mutual and general confidence exists, the market is an economic institution enabling meeting of people as economic actors who use a contract as a rule for their relations and they mutually exchange goods and services to satisfy their needs and desires. The market is subject to the principles of so-called commutative (exchange) justice which governs relations of giving and receiving between equal subjects. However, social teaching of the Church has never stopped to emphasize the importance of distributive justice and social justice for market economy itself. It does so not only because market economy makes part of broader social and political interconnection, but also because of the scheme of relations within

which it operates. If the market relies only on the principle of equivalence of values of exchanged goods, it is not able to create social cohesion which is needed for the market itself to function well. Without internal forms of solidarity and mutual confidence the market cannot fully perform its economic function; it cannot be beneficial for the society and it cannot search solutions for disparities in the social area.

## 6. Economy and social teaching of the Church

It is very interesting to observe the interconnection between Economy as a science and social teaching of the Church. This interconnection is necessary for searching the truth and for acting in the truth about which many authors speak very often. "Till mutual and general confidence exists, the market is an economic institution enabling meeting of people as economic actors who use a contract as a rule for their relations and they mutually exchange goods and services to satisfy their needs and desires. The market is subject to the principles of so-called commutative (exchange) justice which governs relations of giving and receiving between equal subjects. However, social teaching of the Church has never stopped to emphasize the importance of distributive justice and social justice for market economy itself. It does so not only because market economy makes part of broader social and political interconnection, but also because of the scheme of relations within which it operates. If the market relies only on the principle of equivalence of values of exchanged goods, it is not able to create social cohesion which is needed for the market itself to function well. Without internal forms of solidarity and mutual confidence the market cannot fully perform its economic function". [Benedikt XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, p. 49-50] If we want to understand economy as a science, it is necessary to say that "Economy is a theoretical science and as such it does not say anything about what values one should have and what objectives one should pursue. It does not set up any final objectives. This is not the task of thinkers but the task of acting people. Science is a product of thinking, acting is a product of the will. In this respect, we can say that economy as a science is neutral with regards to final objectives of people's efforts." [10] History helps to clarify certain facts about development and direction of social teaching of the Church in the field of economy. "Since the beginning, modern Catholic social teaching has used knowledge of developing Social sciences including Economy. This is the case of the document called 'Bor Theses' which was a predecessor of social encyclicals and was created by German and Austrian social thinkers. A famous figure of modern social teaching of the Church was a German Jesuit Osquald von Nell-Breuning who had economic education." [11] An outstanding economist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, N. Rothbard, "dedicated an extensive part of its critically seized history of economic thinking to views of late Scholastics because he described them as great social thinkers and economic analysts. He convincingly showed that views of these men had led to Austrian School of economics which was developed in the 19th century and has continued up to now. Austrian School

boasts of the outstanding economists, from Carl Menger through Eugen von Bohm-Bawerka to Ludwig von Mises and F.A. Hayek who was a famous member of this School awarded with the Nobel Prize in Economy in 1974.” [12]

The man’s role is not only to produce profit which he uses for enhancing his property but this profit also brings responsibility for its usage. “On the basis of the validity of personal property as well as general allocation of things it is important to note that especially ‘excessive profit’ is not left on the arbitrariness of its receiver. He is strictly obliged to use it in a way that is beneficial for the society, e.g. he uses it either for the charitable purposes, or, in case of the profit gained from business and economic activities, its reinvestment will create jobs, or he uses it in another useful way.” [8, p. 21] A receiver can freely decide where and under which conditions he will invest this ‘excessive profit’.

In social work we meet people who found themselves in difficult life situations. These situations mostly result from a bad economic situation. “The family income directly influences the quality of ensuring everyday needs (food, housing, healthcare, education, etc.). The adverse economic situation of families limits possibilities of their children to realize their extra-curricular mental, cultural and sport development.” [13] “All citizens without exception must work on common welfare which then naturally brings benefits to individuals. However, individuals cannot participate in this cooperation equally and in the same way. Whatever is the form of the government, there will always be the diversity and inequality of the conditions without which human coexistence cannot exist and without which it is even not possible to imagine such coexistence. There will always be public officials, legislators and judges; in short, people who lead the country towards peace and who protect it from war.” [Lev XIII, *Rerum novarum (lat. O nových veciach)* Encyklika pápeža Leva XIII, online at: <http://dkc.kbs.sk/>, <http://www.dkc.kbs.sk/dkc.php?frames=1&in=RN>] These personalities bear great responsibility for administration of common property. Equal responsibility pertains to those who decided which public officials and legislators will govern or lead the country.

“Development, not just economic, is evaluated and directed according to this fact and vocation of a man seized in his integrity, i.e. according to his spiritual dimensions. Without doubt, the man needs material property and industrial products improved by constant scientific and technological progress. In addition, increasingly liberal approach to material things satisfies man’s needs and opens new horizons. If there is a danger of excessive consumption and artificial creation of needs, this cannot be an obstacle for respecting and using new kinds of good things and sources of wealth which we have at our disposal; on contrary, we have to see, first of all, God’s gifts and response to man’s vocation which is fully realized in Christ. In order to achieve true development, we cannot ever forget the above-mentioned measuring which is specific nature of the man who was created by God in God’s image and after God’s likeness. Physical and spiritual nature of the man is described in the second chapter related to his creation from 2 elements – dust of the ground from which God creates the man’s body and breath of life breathed in his nostrils. Thus, the man

has affinity with other creatures: he can use them, he has to take care of them and – as written in the Book of Genesis – he is situated in the garden to cultivate it and to guard it, so he is superior to all other creatures which were given under his administration by God. But at the same time, the man has to be subject to God's will which prescribes him some limits in using things and governing over them and he promises him immortality. As the man is created in God's image, he is somehow similar to him. On the basis of this teaching, development can not lie neither in using and unlimited owning of created things and products of human inventiveness, nor in unlimited governance over them. Man is supposed to subject his ownership, his governance and use of things to his similarity to God and to his vocation of immortality." [Ján Pavol II, 1987. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, online at: <http://www.kbs.sk/?cid=1117276830>] "In this context, the message of Christian personalism is very important. It clearly articulates that other man does not represent the threat but that communication with him as with a fellow gives us the opportunity to the full realization. Life requires self-limitation based on the principle of the orientation on good." [14] Let's reconsider the notion of the natural law as a standard which could be followed by wise and honest people, also as regards the personal property.

## **7. Socially responsible business in the social area according to teaching of the Church**

The role, importance and meaning of social work in the world are obvious. If we want to demonstrate the success of this work, it is good to think of the primary motivation and inspiration for this demanding and beneficial activity. During its existence, the Church contributed to institutionalization of the care about widows, orphans, the sick and people excluded from the society. We can mention activities and determination of many people who responded to the needs of the society in which they lived. The personalities from the recent period involve Mother Theresa, Padre Pio, John Paul II, Pavel Peter Gojdič and Sára Salkaházi, who significantly contributed to the help to people in their difficult life situations. They fought for those who found themselves on the margin of the society. Not only they tried to help them, but they looked for causes to which they also drew attention. The Church is then criticized that it does not participate in tackling social problems of distressed people sufficiently. If the Church wants to be faithful to Gospel, moreover it even must be faithful to Gospel because it must use Gospel to encourage and motivate its believers according to Jesus' words: "whatever you have done to one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it to me" (Matthew 25.40). The least are the distressed people who depend on help, and especially the poor. Christ identifies himself with them. This Gospel text is often misinterpreted. If a Christian throws something to the distressed person, he thinks it is sufficient. Such a 'philosophy' enrooted in human thinking even in our times. It is sufficiently nourished and justified by various factors.

“The Church sometimes lacks the courage to accept societal vocabulary of these phenomena and established terms as well as technical theoretical knowledge used in the social sphere.” [15] The Catholic Church is continuously criticized but it has participated, through history, in the praiseworthy charitable activity in the social sphere. “Social teaching of the Church has its source in Bible, starting with Book of Genesis, but first of all in gospels and letters of apostles. Since the beginning, the problem of work has belonged to teaching of the Church, to its teaching about man, public life and especially to teaching about social morality which has been developed according to the needs of various periods. This heritage of the tradition was taken over by popes who developed it by teaching about modern ‘social issue’, mainly in the encyclical ‘*Rerum novarum*’. With regards to this issue, increasing problem of human work has been constantly adapted to new needs and it continues preserving Christian basis of the truth which can be called eternal.” [Ján Pavol II, *Laborem exercens*, online at: <http://www.kbs.sk/?cid=1117276176>]

Looking for the truth and exploring the past when many people were not afraid of standing up and pointing out the defects in the society, we can also pose the question about why the Church deals with the issue of social work. Why it devotes to it and what is the basis for this. What importance does the Church have? Leo III writes in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*: “We approach the subject with confidence and surely by Our right, for the question under consideration is certainly one for which no satisfactory solution will be found unless religion and the Church have been called upon to aid. Moreover, since the safeguarding of religion and of all things within the jurisdiction of the Church is primarily Our stewardship, silence on Our part might be regarded as failure in Our duty. Assuredly, a question as formidable as this requires the attention and effort of others as well, namely, the heads of the State, employers and the rich, and finally, those in whose behalf efforts are being made, the workers themselves. Yet without hesitation We affirm that if the Church is disregarded, human striving will be in vain. Manifestly, it is the Church which draws from the Gospel the teachings through which the struggle can be composed entirely, or, after its bitterness is removed, can certainly become more tempered. It is the Church, again, that strives not only to instruct the mind but to regulate by her precepts the life and morals of individuals, that ameliorates the condition of the workers through her numerous and beneficent institutions, and that wishes and aims to have the thought and energy of all classes of society united to this end, that the interests of the workers be protected as fully as possible. And to accomplish this purpose she holds that the laws and the authority of the State, within reasonable limits, ought to be employed. Therefore, let it be laid down in the first place that a condition of human existence must be borne with, namely, that in civil society the lowest cannot be made equal to the highest.” [Lev XIII, *Rerum novarum*]

This principle is very important and the Church applies it when it deals with raised issues. Although we can not eliminate social inequalities in the world, we can and we should try to reduce them and to help those who found

themselves in difficult life situations. It is enriching for all and at the same time it contributes to development of the whole society and to acceptance of own limits resulted from imperfections. "Even if you cannot learn it from the standard textbooks in the West, the Catholic Church revolutionized charitable donorship in practice, with regards to both spirit and application. The results speak for themselves: it was the unprecedented extent of charitable donorship and systematic institutionalized care about widows, orphans and the poor." [12, p. 147] Social work has a permanent place in social teaching of the Church which constantly participates in searching the truth and does not stick to the previous conclusions. It is ready to face new problems which result from the development of the society and new aspects of culture which influence man and the whole society.

## 8. Conclusions

Societies as well as individuals look for the ways to overwhelm or reduce the influence of increasing social problems, to improve the lives of individuals and the environment where they live. Poverty, hunger, diseases, discrimination and other problems have been persisting for several centuries not only in poor countries, but in the developed countries as well. Modern technology, culture and the change of lifestyle have not led only to the proclaimed improvement in the quality of life, but they have also brought many negative phenomena and problems. Globalization, bipolarization and associated negative phenomena also require stronger devotion to social issues.

We encounter various opinions on charitable, voluntary and non-profit activities in our society. This society is characterized by individualism; everyone wants to live 'his' life and does not want anybody to intervene in his life. People like staying in their houses with their families. On one hand, they look for solitude, but on the other hand, the man is a sociable creature. He needs to give, to feel useful and to live in the community.

Helping other people is conditioned by the satisfaction of own needs and by the feeling of security in one's own family. Satisfaction of own needs does not express only the man's selfishness but it also wants to say that only equilibrated people with a big heart are able to help and they manage to overwhelm their own suffering and to help others. This help is realized by participation in non-profit activities and projects. Volunteers and social workers are willing to invest their time, skills, knowledge, abilities and experience acquired in their personal and professional lives in favour of those who need it.

When we speak about investing into social area, it is important to distinguish two levels. The first level is the level of help to those who most need it and they depend on such help. The second level is about the profit from this work which is not realized in the financial form but in the form of acquired experience and skills. It is necessary to realize that only those who are able to give, are also able to grow. This is subject to constant willingness to help, work on oneself and not to be afraid of assisting others. Investing into work in a non-

profit sector requires to respect other opinions and views and to work with sufficient responsibility for people entrusted.

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