Empowering Future Leaders: Integrating CSR and Sustainability in Higher Education Through Community Engagement

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Abstract

This paper introduces a process that aims to empower students as responsible global citizens by incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability into education through community-engaged learning. Established through a collaboration between a university lecturer and the Corvinus Science Shop, a university center for community engagement, this initiative evolved from nine semesters of BA-level experience with multiple community partners to an MA-level course that now also includes corporate support. This partnership enriches students' ability to CSR project that can be implemented by the community partner, fostering skill development and encouraging positive attitudinal shifts toward complex societal issues. The course's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and continuous feedback loops ensure lasting impact and relevance to global sustainability.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; community-engaged learning; sustainability; science shop; SDGs; student empowerment

Introduction

Throughout our career in academia, we have strived to uphold the highest standards of teaching excellence while continually innovating to enhance the educational journey for our students. Our approach to teaching is grounded in a belief of the power of education to ignite curiosity, inspire critical thinking, and drive positive change. We are passionate about creating inclusive and engaging learning environments where every student feels valued, supported, and challenged to excel.

One of the hallmarks of our teaching philosophy is a dedication to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education. We firmly believe that educators play a pivotal role in shaping the future leaders who will drive progress towards a more sustainable and equitable world. By integrating sustainability principles into our curriculum and fostering discussions around social and environmental issues, we aim to empower students to become informed global citizens and change agents in their communities.

In addition to our commitment to sustainability education, we have also been deeply involved in innovative pedagogical practices aimed at promoting active learning, collaboration, and critical inquiry. Through community engaged learning initiatives, we continuously seek to create dynamic and interactive learning experiences that resonate with diverse student populations and cater to varied learning styles.

This application introduces a collaboration between a lecturer and a competence centre aiming at the continuous development of and support for a course on Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability in partnership with community partners thriving to implement SDGs via the pedagogical approach of community engaged research and learning. At the focus of the application is how the course serves sustainability goals through innovative pedagogy where not only the content but also the format and process authentically exemplify SDGs. The course is part of the CEMS program, and Deloitte, as a corporate partner, provides pro bono support to student groups to ensure the success of the project.
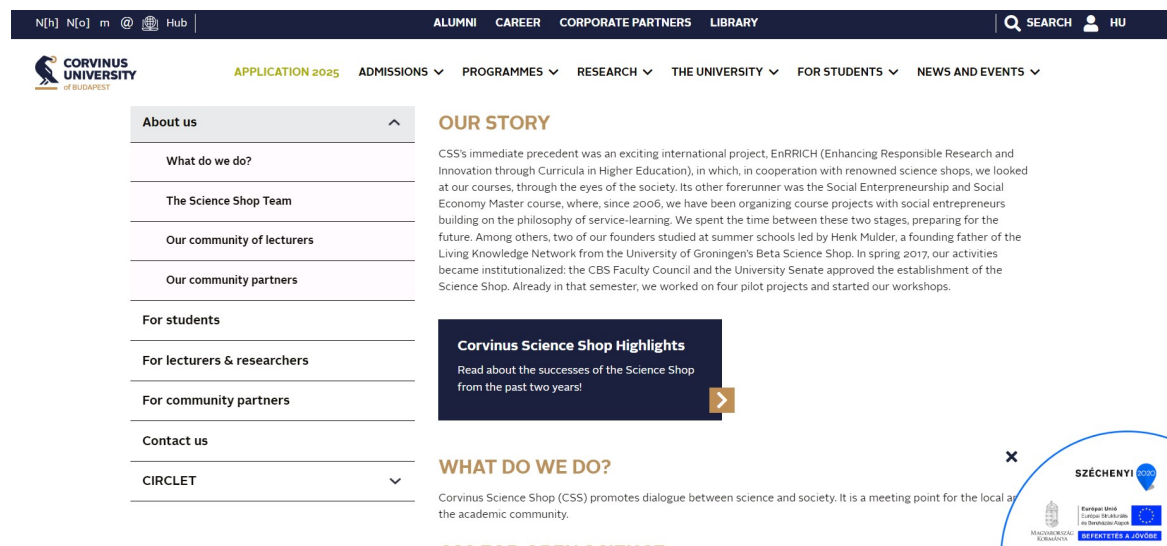

Fig. 1. Home screen of the official website of Corvinus Science Shop
Source: Corvinus Science Shop (n.d.).

Case development (Development of a CSR project for a community organization with the involvement of a corporate partner)

The main meaning of the course is that students learn about CSR, sustainability, environmental and social awareness and conscious consumption through a variety of examples, case studies, as well as the negative and positive aspects of responsibility. In the course, they must develop a real project/partnership proposal for a community partner, i.e. they must prepare a CSR cooperation offer for one company per group on behalf of the community partner that they can actually implement when visiting that company. In order to measure the impact of the course on students, awareness of individual responsibility is examined using the Q method and interview. Our main research question is how the impact and attitude changes can be achieved by the Corporate Social Responsibility course in university students, through which we can further develop the course Corporate Sustainability and CSR for MA level and involve a corporate partner. Students thus, on the one hand, create a product, and on the other hand, by examining the change in their own behavior and attitudes, facilitate the development of the course, which will also enable students enrolled in the course in the following semesters and MA level course to develop a higher-quality education.

In some cases, we discuss sustainability and accountability through problem positions, the essence of which is to generate real debate in the audience, as individuals have different attitudes of responsibility. We discuss topics in their everyday lives such as fast fashion, the electronics industry or the situation of female workers, etc. In the community engaged project, students learn about good and bad examples that can be used. The task is innovative because of the "help for the community partner", and mutually beneficial learning with the community partner, and because they are not working on fictional tasks, but can develop real solutions in the CSR cooperation offer they are preparing. It is also innovative by the fact that they can induce a change in individual attitudes by discussing cases they may encounter in their daily lives. The innovation of the course is strengthened by students by actively engaging in research, contributing to the course development through attitude examination.

The course can support the social interaction factor in more ways. Group work within the course facilitates collaboration and relationship-building among students. Collaborating on projects or assignments (Table 1) provides opportunities for idea exchange, cooperation, and the development of problem-solving skills. Consequently, group work typically fosters closer connections among students. Collaborating with a community partner allows students to establish direct connections with the local community.

This enables students to understand real-life challenges, perspectives, and needs. Engagement with a community partner promotes exposure to real-world situations and the practical application of theoretical knowledge. Interacting with stakeholders of the community partner provides students with an opportunity to comprehend various viewpoints and interests related to the issues at hand.

Direct involvement with local residents, decision-makers, or activists helps students gain a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, and cultural dynamics impacting the community. This understanding is crucial as it assists students in designing and implementing effective solutions that address the needs of all relevant stakeholders.

Table 1. Assignments related to the community engaged project

1.   Create questions for the community partner based on their accessible information!
During week 2 of the course, students have the opportunity to meet their community partner for the first time, and preparing to do so is to read through the community partner's website/social media page and formulate at least one question for them.
2.   Mission statement evaluation
Choose three companies operating in Hungary and find their mission statements! •Enter the names of the companies in the shared link! •For the moodle exercise, upload the mission evaluation along the following criteria: •Does it include a reference to sustainability? •Does it contain any keywords related to the mission of the community partner?
3.   Which SDGs can be linked to the community partner?
Identify the goals that a company can more easily achieve through cooperation with the community partner. What are the objectives that can be achieved directly and indirectly? It also has to be explained when cooperation with a community partner cannot be linked to a goal.
4.   Who are the stakeholders of the community partner?
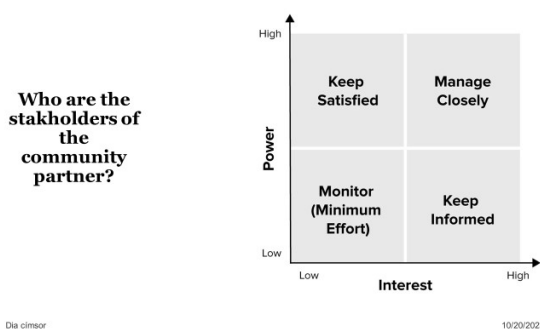
Who are the stakeholders of the community partner, please take them in the stakeholder map from the companies' point of view!

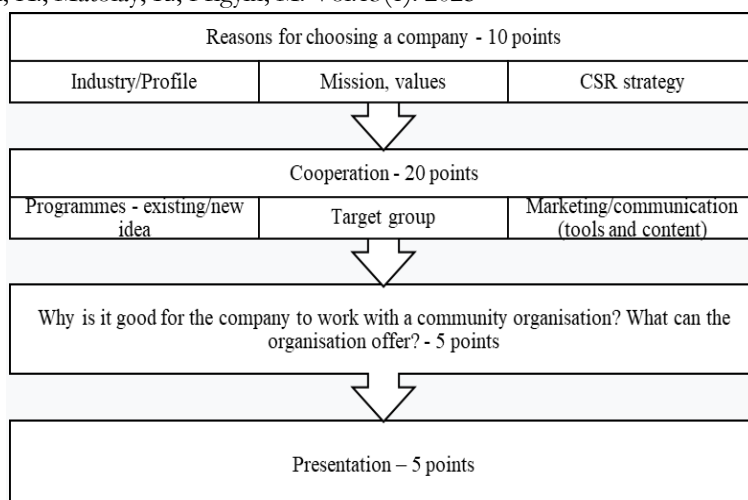| |
|---|
| **5.   Which of Kotler and Lee's types of CSR activities do you think the company you choose can be associated with by collaboration with the community partner?** |

Support your arguments!
Give examples and ideas.

6.   Analyze the selected company website base on the questions below!

- At what level does CSR appear on the website?
- Does the CSR activity include any keywords of the community partner?
- How is it linked to NGOs/Civil society/community partners?
- CSR activities of companies on social media!
     - Topics related to the community partner
     - Topics about cooperation between the company and NGOs/civil society/community partners

7.   Presentation for the community partner

Reasons for choosing a company - 10 points		
Industry/Profile	Mission, values	CSR strategy

Cooperation - 20 points		
Programmes - existing/new idea	Target group	Marketing/communication (tools and content)

Why is it good for the company to work with a community organisation? What can the organisation offer? - 5 points

Presentation – 5 points

8.	Self-reflection about the whole course especially about the work with the community partner

Congratulations, you have won an Award!

Reminding your peers of the CSR course, you are happy to share the great news about this outstanding performance, and your former classmates are also looking forward to receiving the image of the award.

You may also think that the key learning points of the CSR course and the joint work with the community partner have contributed to winning the award.

To complete this task, follow the five steps described below carefully:

1. **Identify key learning outcomes**.
   Identify key learning points and messages from each meeting, as well as group and individual homework and the joint work with the community partner! The following questions can help in this step:
   Which content element was most interesting, surprising, relevant, thoughtful to you and why?
   Which content element or question did you disagree with and why?
2. **Identify the Award.**
   Imagine what Award you will win in many years!
   It can be associated with anything that you see as a significant achievement in your life and that has caused a positive impact, such as: Successful management in difficult times, The End of a Great War, Stop global warming!, Avoiding corruption, The best father / mother / brother / sister / colleague etc.
   It is worth combining the reward and the positive impact generated by what is learned on the course.
3. Write about the Award!
   Write a description (3-5 pages) that includes:
   What is the Award? How could your participation in the course help you achieve the award?
   Use of past time. (I received this award because...; As a result of my work in this field... ... because of what I learned many years ago on the Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility course, I was able to... etc.).
4. Visualize your life.
   Create, assemble or draw your Award.
   Make a picture of the Award.
   The quality of the cell phone camera is insufficient. Creativity is not about the "beauty" of the award here. This practice is aimed at promoting the unusual presentation and practice of "out of the box" thinking.
5. Carry the self-reflection task into the moodle.
   Upload the description and photo of the award.
   The task is valid, if you have at least a three-page description. What is the award and How it relates to the course the key learning points and the concept of positive impact, Images of the Awards.
   Your personal opinion or feelings do not affect your assessment.

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Over the BA course of 8 semesters, we worked with a total of 11 community partners and than in the MA level for 3 semesters with 3 more partners (Table 2). The course has been through continuous development during this time. In the first semester, there were 3 meeting points with the community partner, but we did not include them in the student activities itself. Based on student feedback, we began to develop the course tasks along the project, which helped the students in the process of writing the project. In 2021, our participation in the CIRCLET project confirmed the

need to engage the community partner more effectively, so we also coordinate along the individual student assignments and eventually ask for written feedback on student work. The CSR collaboration proposals created by students are used by the community partner in the personal meeting with the companies, which helps them to reach the company more easily and create a positive collaboration.

Table 2. Assignments related to the community engaged project

Semester	Community Partner	SDG
	BA level	
2018 Spring	FKA	SDG3, SDG4, SDG9, SDG10, SDG11, SDG16, SDG17
	DIA	SDG4, SDG16
2018 Fall	Jön Foundation	SDG7, SDG11, SDG13, SDG15, SDG17
2020 Spring	AdniJoga	SDG3, SDG4, SDG17
2020 Fall	WWF	SDG6. SDG13, SDG15, SDG17
2021 Spring	Ethnic Talents	SDG5, SDG8, SDG10, SDG17
2021 Fall	Hello Anyu	SDG5, SDG8, SDG11, SDG17
2022 Spring	Kompánia Foundation	SDG1, SDG4, SDG5, SDG10, SDG17
	Voneszo	SDG3, SDG10, SDG17
2022 Fall	Onco VR	SDG3, SDG4, SDG9, SDG17
	Világszép Foundation	SDG3, SDG4, SDG10, SDG17
2023 Spring	Bagázs	SDG5, SDG8, SDG10, SDG17
	MA level	
2022 Fall	Profilantrop	SDG3, SDG4, SDG10, SDG11
2023 Fall	Itt és Most Impró Theater	SDG3, SDG4, SDG5, SDG12, SDG16, SDG17
2024 Fall	Heroes of Responsible Dining Foundation	SDG2, SDG3, SDG12, SDG17

Source: Authors' own elaboration

The developed course Corporate Sustainability and CSR accommodates master's level and international students, further enhancing its diversity and inclusivity. By welcoming students from different academic levels and cultural backgrounds, the course promotes a global learning community where diverse viewpoints are valued and respected. This inclusivity ensures that all students have the opportunity to contribute to discussions and collaborative projects, enriching the learning experience for everyone involved. Overall, these aspects demonstrate the course's commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and global learning, making it relevant and insightful to instructors in various contexts.

A very good example of the „joy" experienced by the students is that during the meeting with the Company Foundation outside the university, the students invented a 10-station competition for the children studying in Tanoda, each group came up with their own ideas and as they saw the reaction of the children, they adapted and shaped along the games on the station.

"My favourite 'hour' was when we went to school because everyone was very kind and I felt like the kids were happy with us and we really did something for them."

"It brought me closer to the particular social problem and the personal visit was a very lasting experience for me, I think a lot about it. It's completely different to talk about a topic or travel and see the children with our own eyes."

"It affects my value system. I was afraid of young Gypsies (it could be racist and embarrassing, but I had prejudices), yet I went there with complete openness and it was a very good experience to play with them. They were no different than other children."
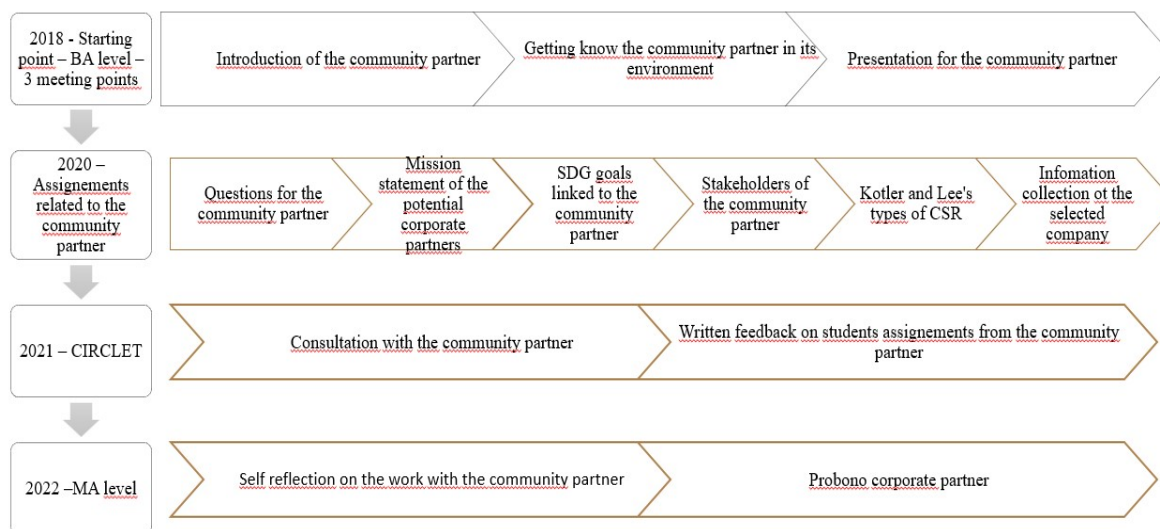
Fig. 2. Development of the project based on community engaged learning

Source: Authors' own elaboration

As an iteration in the educational process, the community engaged course contributes to the development and awareness of students in many ways. During the course, students will have the opportunity to gain insight into the functioning of a community partner, to understand its problems and challenges. As a result, they will not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also gather experiential knowledge from real life. In addition, students can share their own ideas and suggestions without restrictions, which encourages creativity and proactive participation.

The solutions and initiatives created during the project create value for community partners, helping them work and their goals. Participation in projects also develops individual responsibility, as students must also take responsibility for implementing their own ideas, serving the community and managing environmental problems.

This also changes the attitude of students toward sustainability issues, which contributes to the development of a more responsible and socially-environmentally sensitive way of thinking. The community engaged course thus not only seeks to transfer knowledge but also promotes students' personal and professional development through hands-on experience and community engagement.

Due to the content of the course, all SDG targets are addressed at some level within the course. Project-based collaboration with community partners at Corvinus Science Shop reinforces the following SDG goals: SDG4, SDG10, SDG11, SDG17, because it improves the quality of education (SDG4), reduces inequalities with collaborative work (SDG10), makes communities more sustainable (SDG11) and builds partnerships. (SDG17). The association of each community partner with the SDG objectives was also diverse, so that the specific SDG goal was more pronounced during that semester.
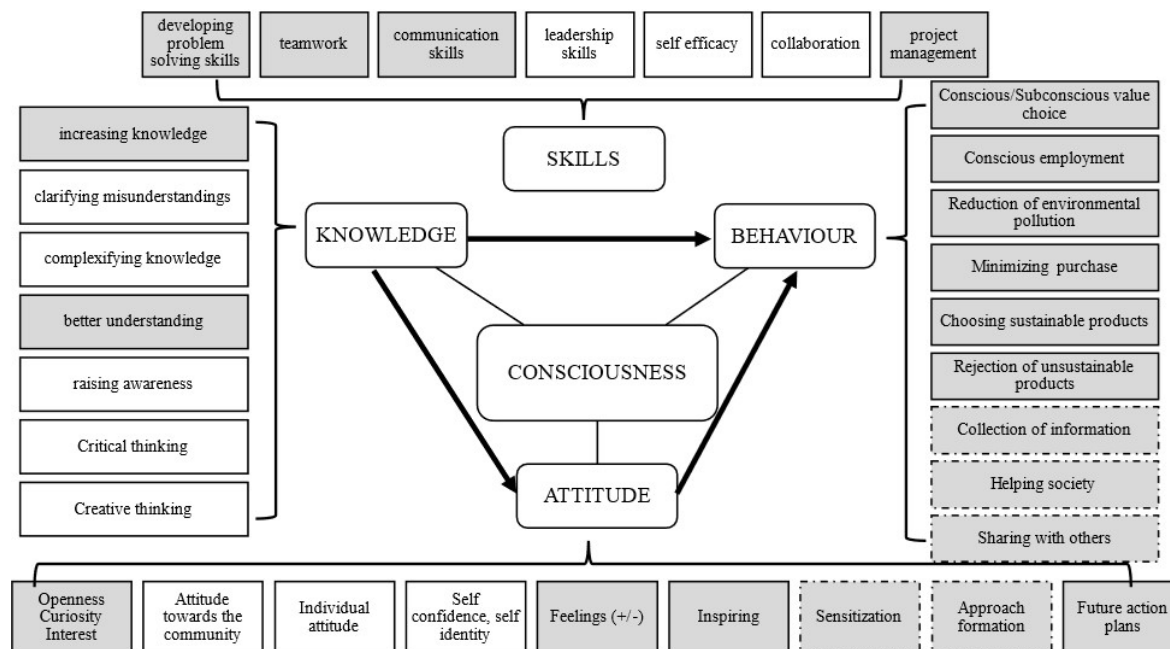
Fig. 3. Students's skill development based on students' feedback, evaluations, research and publications

Source: Authors' own elaboration

The course focuses on promoting various skills among students, as evidenced by their feedback, evaluations, research and publications. It emphasizes the development of cross-sectoral thinking, encouraging students to transcend boundaries between different sectors or industries. Additionally, it enhances problem-solving abilities and fosters collaboration, thereby developing essential soft skills. Furthermore, the course aims to cultivate transversal competencies, which are versatile skills applicable across various contexts and disciplines. Through these initiatives, students are equipped with a comprehensive skill set necessary for success in both academic and professional endeavours. Based on the research, changes in students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors could also be identified as a result of the course's impact, both in the short and long term.

The course is relevant across content as it embraces diversity by incorporating a wide range of topics and themes relevant to the partners involved. By engaging with partners from various sectors and backgrounds, students are exposed to diverse perspectives and issues, enriching their learning experience. This approach ensures that the course content remains inclusive of different value systems, thereby promoting shared, global learning.

The course adopts a CIRCLET approach, allowing for interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange among students. This method encourages students from different academic backgrounds and disciplines to work together, fostering a rich and inclusive learning environment. By integrating perspectives from various fields, the course promotes cross-disciplinary understanding and encourages students to appreciate different approaches to problem-solving.

Community-engaged research and learning (CERL) is a pedagogical approach that integrates academic inquiry with community needs and priorities. It emphasizes collaboration between students, educators, and community members to address real-world issues and produce mutually

beneficial outcomes. Building on the work from the CIRCLET project, which focused on enhancing digital competences through collaborative learning, the pedagogical approach of community-engaged research and learning can be further refined and tailored for maximum effectiveness. Here's a detailed description of this approach:

- Community Partnership: CERL begins with establishing partnerships with local communities or organizations. These partnerships are based on mutual respect, trust, and shared goals. The CIRCLET project's focus on digital competences can be aligned with community needs related to technology access, literacy, or utilization. Lecturers and facilitators collaborate with community partners to identify relevant issues or questions that students can address through research and learning activities. In the case of this course, the problem for the community partner was to build a corporate partnership, which was addressed by the CSR cooperation proposals written by the students.

- Co-creation of Knowledge: In CERL, knowledge is co-created through meaningful engagement with community stakeholders. Lecturers and facilitators facilitate collaborative processes where students, community members, and academics share their expertise, perspectives, and experiences. This co-creation of knowledge ensures that research and learning outcomes are contextually relevant and applicable to real-world challenges. The output guides designed for lecturers and facilitators in the CIRCLET project can serve as frameworks for structuring collaborative processes and facilitating knowledge co-creation. In the course, the students learn from the community partner, a new approach is introduced, while the community partner is brought closer to the ideas of the corporate sector through the students' thinking and work.

- Experiential Learning: CERL emphasizes experiential learning, where students actively engage in real-world research, problem-solving, and reflection. Through hands-on experiences, students develop critical thinking skills, empathy, and a deeper understanding of community issues. The output guides can provide lecturers and facilitators with strategies for designing experiential learning activities that align with the principles of CERL and the objectives of the CIRCLET project. In this course, the key benefit of working with a community partner is that students can work on real problems.

- Reflection and Critical Inquiry: Reflection is an integral component of CERL, enabling students to critically examine their experiences, assumptions, and learning outcomes. Lecturers and facilitators guide students in reflecting on their community-engaged research and learning experiences, encouraging them to consider the ethical, social, and cultural implications of their work. The output guides can include prompts and exercises to facilitate reflective practices and foster critical inquiry among students. At the end of the course, a self-reflection assignment allows students to look back on their work over the whole semester.

- Reciprocal Benefits: CERL emphasizes the importance of reciprocity, ensuring that both students and community partners benefit from the collaboration. Students gain practical skills, academic knowledge, and a deeper understanding of community issues, while community partners receive valuable insights, resources, and solutions to pressing challenges. The output guides can help lecturers and facilitators evaluate the impact of community-engaged research and learning initiatives and identify opportunities for continuous improvement and mutual benefit. Student feedback also confirms the many benefits that students have gained from working with community partners, and the business-community partnerships that students' ideas have led to are the most identifiable benefit of the course for the community partner.

- Sustainable Partnerships: CERL aims to establish sustainable partnerships that endure beyond the duration of a single project or course. Lecturers and facilitators work with community partners to build trust, capacity, and shared ownership of initiatives. The output guides can provide guidance on nurturing and maintaining sustainable partnerships, including strategies for communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. One of the best examples of this, as expressed by a student in the attached video, is that he felt like volunteering at the community partner after the course.

In summary, the pedagogical approach of community-engaged research and learning builds on the principles of collaboration, co-creation of knowledge, experiential learning, reflection, reciprocity, and sustainability. By integrating the insights and resources from the CIRCLET project, lecturers and facilitators can effectively engage students in addressing real-world challenges while enhancing their digital competences and fostering positive relationships with local communities.

Community engaged learning also brings significant advancements and benefits on the part of educators. First, the environment requiring continuous preparation encourages educators to continue to research and understand current sustainability issues. This makes educators always up to date in the field and able to provide students with fresh information and examples. Comparing and analyzing different student responsibility attitudes opens up new perspectives for faculty members. This can help them to gain a deeper understanding of students' different values, attitudes and motivations, and give them the opportunity to customize their teaching methods and content. It is a great pleasure and satisfaction for teachers to see that change and development actually takes place in students by actively participating in the course activities. Such visible results and positive feedback are motivating for them and reinforce them in the belief that their work really makes sense. Through community engaged teaching, educators can also connect with a variety of community partners with whom they can contribute directly or indirectly to solving their problems. This not only builds professional relationships, but also gives educators the opportunity to bring real-life examples and experiences into the educational process. The study of attitude change and the analysis of the impact of the course enables educators to continuously develop and refine their teaching methods and content. Thus, community engaged teaching promotes not only the professional and personal development of students but also of teachers.

It is also useful for the university as we strengthen the goals of the Science Shop organization through the course, that is, to strengthen the relationship and dialogue of the university and society through the community-engaged research and learning projects. Companies benefit the economy because students, as prospective employees and managers, have a more responsible approach by completing the course. More attention is paid to sustainability issues, so it is also environmentally and socially beneficial to complete the course, because if only one student makes a more socially or environmentally beneficent decision in a given situation, it will take us one step closer to a more sustainable world, because the behavior of each individual matters.

Questions/issues for discussion

Question 1. *In what ways does community-engaged learning in CSR and sustainability education equip students to address complex societal challenges, and how might it inspire critical reflection on their roles as responsible global citizens?*

To address this question, readers should consider the unique benefits of integrating community-engaged learning into CSR education. Engaging directly with local communities and corporate partners provides students with real-world insights into societal needs and the practical application of sustainability principles. By examining the role of experiential learning theories, such as Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (2009) and Watson et al (2019) and Dewey's "learning by doing" approach (1938) and Van Poeck et al. (2020), readers can explore how hands-on CSR projects deepen students' understanding of social responsibility.

This question also encourages readers to critically reflect on how interdisciplinary collaboration with diverse stakeholders — including community partners, NGOs, and corporate entities — enhances students' ability to develop practical solutions. References to stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) may deepen understanding of the benefits and challenges of this approach (Schaltegger et al., 2019).

Further reflection could explore the broader implications for students' ethical perspectives, as well as how this approach contributes to shaping the future of sustainable and responsible business practices. Readers might be encouraged to consider how similar approaches could be applied within other educational contexts or fields.

Question 2. *How does the integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects within academic curricula impact students' attitudes towards sustainability, and what long-term effects can this have on their professional careers?*

This question invites an exploration of the lasting influence of CSR education on students' future actions and professional choices (Zsóka and Ásványi, 2023). The discussion could cover how students' attitudes toward sustainability evolve through hands-on learning experiences and how this transformation might shape their careers in both the corporate and non-profit sectors. The role of experiential learning in shifting mindsets could be linked to theories of adult learning (e.g., Mezirow's transformative learning theory (2018)) and their implications for future professional practice.

Question 3. *What challenges and opportunities arise from the collaboration between academic institutions, corporate partners, and local communities in CSR-based education, and how can these partnerships contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?*

This question could lead to a deeper analysis of the benefits and difficulties of cross-sector collaboration (Höffken and Lazendic-Galloway, 2024). Topics could include the alignment of educational objectives with the needs of local communities, the potential for corporate social responsibility to drive societal change, and how such partnerships can promote SDG-related solutions. A focus on theories like the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997) could provide a foundation for discussing how such collaborations contribute to people, planet, and profit.

Question 4. *How can the continuous feedback loop between students, community partners, and corporate stakeholders improve the design and impact of CSR projects, and what role does reflection play in this process?*

Readers could examine how ongoing feedback ensures that CSR projects remain relevant and effective. The role of reflection (Howell, 2021), both personal and collective (as in reflective journals or group discussions), could be tied to theories of reflective practice (Schön, 1983). This would encourage readers to consider the importance of adaptability and continuous improvement in CSR initiatives, as well as the potential for learning from successes and failures.

Question 5. *In what ways can the community-engaged learning approach in CSR education challenge traditional educational methods, and what might this mean for the future of business and marketing education?*

This question invites readers to critically assess the effectiveness of traditional classroom-based learning versus the experiential, community-engaged learning model. It could explore the potential for disrupting traditional pedagogies and how this model could reshape business and marketing education in response to growing demands for socially responsible and sustainable practices (Rodríguez-Zurita et al., 2024).

Conclusions

Judgments and Comments

The course presented in this case study successfully integrates Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sustainability principles with community-engaged learning, showcasing an innovative and practical approach to sustainability education. The actions undertaken—such as real-world CSR project development, collaboration with community partners, and alignment with SDG objectives—are particularly praiseworthy. These initiatives are timely and relevant, addressing the increasing need for experiential learning opportunities that prepare students for complex global challenges. The inclusion of hands-on projects not only deepens students' understanding of CSR and sustainability but also enhances their ability to design actionable solutions for societal problems.

The partnership with Corvinus Science Shop has been instrumental in enabling these outcomes, as it fosters meaningful collaborations between academic stakeholders, students, and local communities. Through these partnerships, the course bridges theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that students gain valuable skills while creating tangible benefits for community partners. This dual focus on student development and societal impact exemplifies the potential of education to drive positive change.

The ability of the course to foster critical reflection is another notable strength. Assignments that include self-reflection and stakeholder mapping encourage students to consider diverse perspectives and challenge their own assumptions, fostering a more empathetic and nuanced approach to problem-solving.

Proposals for Improvement and Alternatives

While the course has demonstrated significant impact, there are opportunities for further enhancement. For instance, expanding the scope of community partnerships to include rural and underrepresented areas could address broader sustainability issues, such as regional economic inequalities and access to resources. Working with rural organizations would also provide students with insights into the unique challenges faced by these communities, enriching their learning experience.

Additionally, integrating advanced digital tools and methods—such as virtual collaboration platforms, data analytics, and AI-driven tools for stakeholder analysis—could enhance the course's efficiency and scalability. These technologies could facilitate more effective communication between students and partners and provide innovative ways to analyze community needs and corporate strategies.

To strengthen the long-term impact of the course, implementing a follow-up mechanism to track the professional trajectories of alumni and their engagement with CSR and sustainability practices in their careers would be valuable. This feedback loop would offer actionable insights for refining the curriculum and ensuring its alignment with evolving societal needs.

Argument for the Case and Action Selection

This case study was conducted to illustrate the transformative potential of embedding CSR and sustainability into higher education through community-engaged learning. The actions described—such as student-designed CSR proposals for community partners—were selected because they uniquely address the dual objectives of student development and societal benefit. By focusing on these practical, collaborative initiatives, the course stands as a model for how academic programs can operationalize the SDGs within their curricula.

The decision to collaborate with the Corvinus Science Shop was intentional, as its mission aligns closely with the objectives of the course. This partnership enables access to a diverse network of community organizations, creating a dynamic learning environment where students can explore the intersections of academic knowledge, corporate responsibility, and societal impact.

Final Reflections

In conclusion, the course demonstrates how community-engaged learning can enrich sustainability education by combining theoretical rigor with practical application. It equips students with essential skills—such as critical thinking, empathy, and collaboration—while contributing to the broader societal good. These attributes prepare students to become responsible leaders who are well-positioned to address the pressing sustainability challenges of our time.

Moving forward, the incorporation of rural perspectives, advanced digital tools, and mechanisms for longitudinal impact assessment will further enhance the program's effectiveness. This case serves as an inspiring example for educators, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to create impactful and sustainable educational frameworks that empower future generations.

Acknowledgements

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