



Interview with Dr. Carlo MUSTO D'AMORE,
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SAPIENZA
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What does it mean being a University Socially Responsible?

The university is socially responsible for its own nature, or at least it should be, because of its function of institution aimed to guarantee personal growth and social mobility.

The university is a growth factor for its reference territory and, therefore, it should be in constant contact and relationship with what surrounds it.

Today there are models and methodologies, called sustainability reports, which measure the economic, environmental and social impact of university even in relation to the context in which it is established analysing the GDP that it could generate both at local and national scale.

I believe that, to this regard, it is fundamental to define a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators to "measure" the role of universities in their communities to provide useful information on the degree of responsibility of the universities.

We should not forget that universities are public institutions, and that in their role of common "goods" are covered with an additional sense of responsibility - very close to ethics - that resides in the two concepts of transparency and honesty.

A university is a glass house, whose procedures must be accessible and clear for all citizens in terms of staff and suppliers recruitment, public funds management, quality and high level services. The reputation of a university is based on all these things.

For example, if I entrust a construction business to a company I do not have only to verify that it is in compliance with taxes, like the law asks me, but also that it equally treats its staff, disposes properly of its own waste in a sustainable way and so on.



For sure, universities can and should be more responsible, and it would be appropriate to turn the proclamations in actual practices through awareness initiatives and monitoring systems. Our job is to create a healthy economy and environment, being interpreter of responsibility within the society.

How does it apply to university activity? Which are the key elements of USR implementation?

I think that teaching and practicing social responsibility is essential for education and that it should already be present in university curricula as well as in the training of university staff.

The university must be an open institution, which creates breaches and not walls, that practices sharing processes. Educating to social responsibility implies this attitude to openness and collaboration.

Unfortunately, in Italian universities, in all scientific career, from the engineer to the literate, up to the mathematic and the surgeon, it is perceived the lack of a social imprinting that should have been acquired during the studies.

We are, therefore, in a paradoxical situation: we claim for instance that citizenship participate in crowdfunding of our research ideas, but we are not able of engaging it.

What are the limits/ opportunities/ risks for introducing social responsibility in curriculum as a cross-training activities?

I absolutely agree with the introduction of training courses dealing with responsibility and I think that they are essential for at least two reasons. First of all, because university should grow up men and not simply "graduate", able to contribute proactively, with enthusiasm and aware to the society. Secondly, because I consider that civic education, not included anymore in high school curriculum, is one of the university missions.

In Sapienza we have already activated training activities and information initiative for the administrative staff: from courses against corruption to initiatives for organizational wellbeing, up to the protection of social inclusion and gender through the work of the University Warranty Committee.

Training is therefore functional to open an internal debate about responsibility, to analyse university accountability and raise awareness on these issues.

What are the limits/ opportunities/ risks for creating and exchanging good practices, synergies, knowledge etc.? And in creating any work groups?

I see many advantages in the exchange and sharing of good practices about sustainability. But, due to Sapienza huge dimensions, i do believe that it would be better starting with an internal "comparison" to point out and raise awareness about the different realities within



the University, of course without neglecting the necessary dialogue with the outside world. This dialogue should start with other universities, for sure, but also with other potential stakeholders, but in this struggle for meeting who is different from us, we must avoid generalizations and proceed, for example, through the creation of regional clusters to enable a comparison between comparable contexts, which can show similar opportunities and limits.

It is also important to have a look at the international dimension in order to more fully assess our degree of responsibility and look to other models, by verifying their potential exportability.

Do you have any other recommendations, suggestions, strategic partners, ideas or good practices to highlight or to consider?

A good strategy is represented for sure by EU funded projects, which allows you to raise funds specifically to enable accountability and responsibility strategies and create networks supported by adequate dissemination and awareness activities.