

Shaping the Future of Socially Responsible Construction

by Dr. Garry M. Keegan, 2021

With the practice of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) becoming more and more common as a way for companies to take responsibility for the impact their activities have on society, it's worth looking at how this is also beginning to alter wider practices in the construction sector too.

Worldwide, the construction sector plays a pivotal role in society. When looking at the direct *social* impact that the industry has on society, the effect is immense.

In order to be more socially responsible, we need to be aware that the future of the construction sector is not just about industry-specific issues, but about the future of our built environment, *and* our local communities.

By embracing a "give-back" culture, companies in the construction sector can organically create more trust in the community, more innovation in the industry, as well as increase the engagement with their company. In fact, at times, this could even mean the difference between winning a contract or being rejected.

Social Responsibility vs. Industry Profitability

Traditionally, the construction sector has been slow to adopt new processes, undergoing little to no fundamental change over the past few decades.

As members of this industry, we need to remember that the 'artificial' environments we create can have the power to influence both the physical and psychological wellbeing of the people who live in or interact with our creations.

By developing and maintaining an attitude of positive social responsibility, we can help to make the necessary change in the sector. This attitude can also benefit firms by improving the overall company image, as well as potential profitability.

How can firms become more socially responsible?

A useful framework for thinking about social responsibility is to think about how you can generate social value through 'what you build', 'how you build' and 'how you operate'.

Some of the main areas where construction firms can incorporate CSR initiatives in order to have the biggest impacts are in:

- utilising responsible products and practices during construction such as including energy-efficient HVAC and electrical systems, solar panels, and water conservation practices.
- selecting responsible supply chains through suppliers and subcontractors.
- minimising environmental damage and promoting 'Environmental Mediation' with local stakeholders.
- using energy-efficient designs with community wellbeing in mind.
- reducing waste during construction, and most importantly creating a culture of sustainability.
- facilitating increased community and employee engagement.

If you'd like to know more about the importance of the interaction between infrastructure projects and local communities, as well as Corporate Social Responsibility in general, why not consider training by IPC? www.ipc10.com

Upon completion of IPC Training, you will have a good knowledge and appreciation of how to successfully engage with local stakeholders adjacent to projects where you are involved.

Our training will add value to your skillset. It will better prepare you for engaging with difficult local stakeholders, how to design and manage community benefit schemes.

No matter where you work in the world, the same principles apply in engaging with local stakeholders.

Our course will give you great confidence as you encounter local resistance, and for when you are being considered to deliver an important infrastructure project.