

Ensuring Social sustainability in times of shock. A comprehensive framework

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Abstract

Extreme events undermine the progress towards social sustainability and urge an immediate response from the society, in general, and from the private sector, in particular. We propose a multidimensional framework to benchmark firms' effectiveness in palliating the threats to social sustainability post-disaster. The dimensions involve the time response and the scope of activities to the various stakeholders. Within such a framework, 218 corporate actions from 111 companies operating in Spain during the COVID19 pandemic are grouped into four corporate relief strategies: *Selective*, *Symbolic*, *Reactive and Supportive*. The framework allows us to define the notion of Corporate Emergency Responsibility (CER) as corporate responses to external shocks that seek to (build community resilience and) restore social sustainability. We identify some crucial firm factors that determine the path towards a successful CER strategy such as sense, ethics-focused, and partnership building sustainability dynamic capabilities. This exploratory study extends the nascent literature on the company-society interface and provides a guide to efficiently foster social sustainability through corporate responses in times of shock.