Chapter 3


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ABSTRACT

The world is facing multiple changes and challenges; the environment shows inequalities, poverty, and corruption. Ecuador is not the exception. The man is declared the primary focus of the Ecuadorian Constitution to meet such changes. The objective of decreasing poverty, improving wealth distribution, and contributing to sustainable human development is unavoidable. In that context, the university has the pivotal role in generating interaction with society and its reality, to train professionals social and humanly responsible towards such facts, to promote the social management of knowledge from different action fields. The goal of this chapter is to specify the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in a society where they take part, to draw up social responsibility of universities in Guayaquil and the challenges they face, as well as actions that contribute to the eradication of corruption and greater wellbeing of the society.

INTRODUCTION

The current changing process towards a better educational quality in Ecuador is an environment that can and must be exploited to lead universities towards management and development of their work with primary social responsibility. When providing high-quality education based on ethics and human values, the existence of higher education institutions must be the essence of the contribution to the better well-being of the society.

Everybody wishes a long-lasting development and well-being of the population to eradicate poverty and inequalities, and that the world population has a dignified life. What can be done to generate the

changes society needs? Who promotes the changes required? Is education presented as the most suitable means to ensure such transformations?

However, if education has an extensive existence history, why is there so much hardship and poverty in the world? In the Human Development Index (HDI 2011) it is stated that “Latin America is still the most uneven region in the distribution of incomes, but not in health or education” (p. 4). That is ratified in the HDI (2016), where excluded are referred, inequity is an underlying problem. The problem is also manifested in CEPAL (2011) as “it is a widespread fact that inequity in the distribution of incomes of Latin American countries is amongst the highest in the world” (p. 14). Despite the time, that difficulty remains “the average rates of poverty and destitution were not altered significantly in the group of the region between 2012 and 2014, which, in the light of the current economic context, raises concerns in terms of progress possibilities in these areas within the next years” (CEPAL, 2015, p. 16). In Panorama Social (2017), it is stated again that poverty and inequity exist in Latin American countries. The problems are always the same.

No doubt, they are problems that impinge the well-being of the population. “The persistent vulnerabilities constitute a threat to human development, and unless they are addressed systematically through specific policies and different social rules, human development will be neither equitable nor sustainable” (HDI, 2014).

Why does society face the same socioeconomic problems? The immediate answer is the wrong, unfair and selfish action of the man. Why is the environment deteriorating? Again, the crazy work of the man is the responsible one. Why are decisions not well made? The answer is not that premature since the education young people receive seems to be the primary source of knowledge, which becomes the basis for future decision-making.

In such manner, what currently happens might be the result of professionals that universities present to the market, who have in their hand’s crucial decisions at all professional levels and in different institutions.

For instance, if the houses collapse because they are not well built, that can be because of two things: First, professionals with suitable qualifications were not trained in the construction field, and as a result, there are mainly not well-built houses. Second, that may also mean that builders are excellent professionals in their area but lack of ethics and values, since even knowing how to make, for specific reasons or interests, they allow the inadequate building to happen.

That situation may happen with each of the professions, for example with a Physician who did not cure his patient because he could not afford his professional fees. Alternatively, it may happen with an engineer who did not lay enough foundations for the building of a bridge; maybe with a politician who does not act in favor of the society who elected him but on his own interests. This may also be compared with the sportsperson who expects extra financial incentives to demonstrate all his abilities, or this may be compared with an accountant who disguises balances, or with an administrator who does not manages his human resources fairly. In brief, in every activity, there are professionals’ backstage making decisions all the time.

While it is true that not all professionals misbehave, it can be ensured that most of them usually put aside ethics and values when deciding in their professional field. The evidence is the many problems the world is facing, without having concrete answers to solve them. For example, it is known that environmental pollution needs to be decreased, but the question is how much has been cleaned up so far. The evidence around the world show greater pollutions every time.

Then, the need for social responsibility in every decision professionals make in their field is noted. However, how can that be achieved? Here is when the fundamental role of universities comes into play.
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