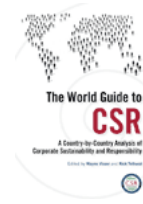




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**THIS CHAPTER
IS AN EXCERPT
FROM**

**The World Guide to CSR: A Country-by-Country
Analysis of Corporate Sustainability and
Responsibility**



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Foreword

Wayne Visser

The idea for this book came in 2007 and 2008 during the international book launch tour of *The A to Z of Corporate Social Responsibility*. As my co-editor, Professor Dirk Matten, and I introduced the book in countries as diverse as Canada, China, Guatemala, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand and the UK, it became clear that there is no universal model of CSR. Nor should there be. Although we may agree on some underlying principles and best practices — most recently encapsulated by ISO 26000 — the concept and practice of CSR must be defined by its national and cultural context, if it is to be relevant and effective.

At the time, there were a few good country comparative reports, including for example *The CSR Navigator* (GTZ 2008, covering 13 countries), *Corporate Citizenship around the World* (Global Education Research Network with Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship 2009, nine countries) and *A Guide to CSR in Europe* (CSR Europe 2009, 20 countries). While incredibly useful and insightful, these reports still left large gaps on the map. *The World Guide to CSR* is an attempt to fill some of those gaps. With five regions and 58 countries profiled,¹ it is still not truly global or comprehensive, but I think it is a good start.

The sentiments behind the book also led me to embark on a ‘CSR Quest’ tour in 2010, visiting over 20 countries on five continents, with the aim of capturing and sharing CSR best practices from around the world. My experience to date, especially in travelling to developing countries, is that many companies (and governments) still have a very narrow view of CSR — at best equating it with philanthropy or community investment, and at worst using it as a superficial public relations or marketing tactic. The tour is an attempt to correct that perception.

At the same time, I have noticed that many of the greatest innovations in CSR are coming from those same countries (think of M-PESA in Kenya, or A Little World in India, for example). So the tour, much like the book, is a way to discover, capture and share these case studies. The way I see it, the *World Guide* represents the past and the present. It tells

1 The chapters are a result of an open ‘Call for Contributors’ that was issued in October 2008.

us how far we have come and is testimony to some great progress across many nations. However, I hope it also reminds us of how far we still have to go. Despite decades of CSR, in virtually every country, across just about every social, environmental and ethical indicator, we are still headed in the wrong direction.

This is why I am calling for a renaissance in CSR — for a new model, which I call Radical CSR or CSR 2.0, where CSR stands for ‘Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility’ and is based on five fundamental principles: Creativity, Scalability, Responsiveness, Glocality² (thinking globally and acting locally) and Circularity (closed-loop thinking and business processes). CSR 2.0 is the subject of another book,³ but I believe the *World Guide* represents a crucial step on our journey to transforming CSR, especially to achieving Glocality.

I hope that, in the years to come (and in future editions of this book), we will continue to fill the gaps in our knowledge of CSR around the world. We are at a crucial juncture in the evolution of CSR. If countries and companies fail to adopt a holistic, embedded, scalable model of CSR, it will continue to suffer from ‘the three curses’ of the status quo, in which CSR tends to be incremental, peripheral and uneconomic. Even worse, it will allow companies to feel good about themselves, while communities crumble, ecosystems collapse and economies descend into chaos.

If, on the other hand, we learn from the lessons of history — including the limitations of old-style CSR (remember, Enron ticked virtually all of the explicit CSR boxes before its collapse in 2001) — then CSR can become a powerful strategy for political, social and environmental change. One thing is for sure: CSR will not disappear. But will it be part of the problem or part of the solution? Will the popular perception of business continue to be like the extractives company portrayed in the movie blockbuster *Avatar* (or, for that matter, BP, in the wake of its latest oil spill catastrophe), or will CSR make it part of a new, more caring mythology?

The jury is still out on that question, but I trust the *World Guide* will inspire CSR enthusiasts, scholars, managers, regulators, activists, students and others to make sure that business lives up to its potential as a force for good in the world.

London, UK
June 2010

2 The term ‘glocalisation’ comes from the Japanese word *dochakuka*, which simply means global localisation.

3 *The Age of Responsibility: CSR 2.0 and the New DNA of Business* (Wiley, 2010).