Green Human Resource Development - Supporting Sustainable Economic Activity in Organizations

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Abstract: This article reviews the literature about "Green Human Resource Development (GHRD), and discusses how human resource development (HRD) which focuses on sustainability can provide business advantages including increased employee attraction, retention, motivation, and productivity. Examples of organizational initiatives that enable and support sustainable operations are discussed from an HRD perspective, including: green supply chain management, transdisciplinary engineering, industrial symbiosis, and creating shared values. This article argues that HRD professionals have a key role to play in enabling and supporting organizations which choose to adopt GHRD, and that doing so can provide advantages to organizations.

Keywords: Green Human Resource Development, Sustainability, Business Advantages, Role of Human Resource Development Professionals.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen increasing attention being paid to environmental concerns. In fact 2019 saw a global wave of concern expressed by people, in particular young people, about changing the way we live on this planet. Many changes have been called for such as switching to greener energy and avoiding fossil fuels. However, in many cases the calls for changes were little more than demands that organizations should change; but exactly what changes can be enacted by organizations so a more sustainable way of operations can be created? What, if any, role do human resource development (HRD) professionals have in supporting more sustainable operations? In this article we discuss how and why organizations can benefit from becoming more sustainable, and what role HRD professionals can play in ensuring organizations do obtain such benefits. We begin by considering the definition of HRD. Then we consider various definitions of so-called strategic HRD (SHRD). Next we discuss what green HRD (GHRD) is, and present literature to show how organizations can benefit from focusing on GHRD. Finally, we will present some examples of how GHRD has been enacted in various organizations. We argue that GHRD can provide a competitive advantage for organizations, and call for human resource development professionals to take on the role of promoting and supporting GHRD within their organizations.

What are HRD & SHRD?

Human resource development (HRD) has been variously defined. Swanson & Holton (2009) have, for example, defined HRD "as a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individual, team, work process, and organizational system performance" (p.4). They elaborate further saying that this definition is not concerned with who does the actual work of HRD, or at what level within an organization the work is done. Other definitions of HRD are reviewed in Swanson & Holton (2009), as well as in Garavan & Carbery (2012). These definitions generally view HRD as something done within organizations in order to improve organizational performance, and there is little concern with societal and global issues expressed in most HRD definitions (Garavan & Carbery, 2012). Accordingly, HRD interventions include training and staff development activities and organization development activities.

These definitions are extended somewhat by the concept of strategic human resource development (SHRD). Gilley & Maycunich Gilley (2003) state that HRD which is strategically integrated will create a results-based philosophy of human resource activities in organizations, transforming organizations from using activity-based to results-based HRD programming. Therefore, according to the authors every employee will be aligned with the strategy of the organization in everything they do; furthermore, human resource

activities and initiatives are not confined to just one department (for example the training section), but are the responsibility of every employee, supervisor, manager and executive. Such joint responsibility for the outcomes or results of HRD programs will result in organizational transformation (Gilley & Maycunich Gilley, 2003). The authors provide a model for conceptualizing six transformational roles which will lead to strategic integration of HRD programs so that results-based HRD can be achieved.

Using a different approach to conceptualizing SHRD, Gibb (2011) provides a review of how HRD can be used in support of strategy. According to Gibb (2011) SHRD activities depend on how strategy itself is framed and contextualized. For example, a first way of framing SHRD is around the process and associated products of strategic planning. Four possible types of HRD interventions are possible in support of strategy development: "strategic thinking (to assist with creating a vision for an organization), strategic definition (to define and elaborate the value proposition), strategic alignment (business model), and strategic enactment (projects and programs)" (Gibb, 2011).

A second way of framing SHRD interventions in support of organizational strategy would be what Gibb (2011) refers to as "five C's" (p. 316), with each "C" coming from a different management area, complete with corresponding definitions and practices. These five C's are: controlling, coordinating, competing, constructing, and changing (Gibb, 2011). Each of these areas has certain practices which contribute to organizational performance in some manner, and furthermore, Gibb (2011) points out that change and learning are central features of these five C's. It is noteworthy that learning and change are also featured as two of three pillars of SHRD by Gilley & Maycunich Gilley (2003) in their conceptualization of SHRD.

A third way of framing SHRD would be to think of HRD activities and programs supporting "cost, innovation, execution, relationship, channel and brand concerns organizations have" (Gibb, 2011). HRD practices that "improve work practices, create protected space, expand and deepen capabilities, inspire trust and loyalty, enhance knowledge and communication and promote ideas and identity" (Gibb, 2011) would help organizations to "respectively, optimise value chain, exploit R&D, refine business processes, leverage networks, and alliances, develop market access and manage customers" (Gibb, 2011). As a result of these varying ways to frame HRD in a strategic context, Gibb (2011) says SHRD is applicable to a wide range of organizational contexts, including organizations whose strategies focus on cost optimization, innovation, execution, relationships, communication channels, and brands.

Despite these conceptualizations of SHRD which appear to offer organizations various benefits, some scholars have criticised SHRD on several grounds. Garavan & Carbery (2012) summarize four criticisms. First, there is an assumption that HRD professionals are important stakeholders in organizations. However, Garavan & Carbery (2012) point out that this is not the case in all organizations. Secondly, SHRD conceptualizations are situated within a Taylorist managerialist perspective that "emphasizes organizational needs and de-emphasizes employee needs" (Garavan & Carbery, 2012). Thirdly, SHRD is conceptualized "in a vertical way rather than as a multi-dimensional" (Garavan and Carbery, 2012) concept. Finally, Garavan & Carbery (2012) state that some early models of SHRD did not include consideration of what line managers, executives, and other stakeholders had as roles and responsibilities. In contrast, subsequent models did provide more elaboration about what these stakeholders did within SHRD programs (Garavan and Carbery, 2012).

Gibb (2011), added that research has not demonstrated a link between SHRD activities and organization performance. As a result of this gap, the author points out those SHRD activities are often seen as costs to the organization with no hard proof available regarding what benefit is to be derived from these activities. This lack of empirical evidence increases the chances that SHRD programs will be cut in times of financial crisis (Gibb, 2011). The author further says "the knowledge bases and disciplines that underpin research and practice in employment and SHRD are just not secure enough to influence strategizing substantially" (Gibb, 2011). The challenge for HRD professionals, therefore, is to articulate carefully how HRD interventions can provide strategic value to organizations in terms of efficiency, productivity and sustainability.

Next, we will consider various research which demonstrates that SHRD initiatives which focus on sustainability, in particular environmental sustainability, can provide benefits to organizations.

The Strategic Value of Green HRD
HRD activities and programs which have an environmental sustainability related focus are known as "green HRD" (GHRD), and GHRD is part of a conceptual theme identified as corporate social responsibility (CSR); green HRD (GHRD) has increasingly become a concern for many organizations (Valentin, 2017). As with HRD and SHRD there is no consensus regarding a definition of CSR. But one definition that better explains the meaning of CSR is the following:

> "*The obligation of the firm to use its resources in ways to benefit society, through committed participation as a member of society, taking into account society at large, and improving*

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welfare of society at large independently of direct gains of the company." *(Stahl & Grigsby, 2001 p. 287, cited in Bierema &D'Abundo, 2003).*

Keeping this broad definition in mind, several scholars' comments will be presented regarding how organizations could meet this definition of CSR for their development, sustenance and advancement.

Spector (2013) states that companies can gain a number of advantages to going green such as increased innovation, lowered costs, reduced organizational risks, improved recruitment, improved employee motivation, and market differentiation. Spector (2013) says that going green is about more than simply complying with regulations. Rather, going green will involve transforming how corporations are designed, and how they operate. This involves change management. Consequently, since change is one of the three pillars of SHRD (Gilley and Maycunich Gilley, 2003) there is a clear role for SHRD professionals to help transform companies to become environmentally sustainable. However, what does it mean for HRD professionals to be engaging in sustainable development?

As discussed in Fien *et al.* (2009), there are a number of perspectives regarding how sustainable development should be defined. In an attempt to bridge the different perspectives, Fien *et al.* (2009) provide two principles that can be used to think about sustainable development. First, is the promotion of understanding of the environmental problems, their origin in the growth models that assume unending resources (which in fact do have finite limitations), and the need for businesses to transition to sustainable growth models. Second, is the idea that society must transition to a holistic view in which the various business and social actors in society are seen as interdependent connected participants in a global system. These two principles can guide HRD professionals as they develop, implement, and evaluate HRD programs. The authors suggest that thinking and living in an environmentally sustainable way requires a change in how we think of our place in the world, and interact with the world. They argue that we must adopt a systems view, and avoid seeing ourselves as apart from nature – a view which in the past has resulted in people thinking of the environment as something which can be manipulated and used to produce desired results. Rather, they argue, humans are inextricably connected with the environment, are constantly affected by the environment, and cause impact on the environment (Fien *et al.,* 2009). The authors therefore, argue that a key undertaking by HRD professionals is to ensure an increasing number of people (employees, employers, and other stakeholders) understand how connected humans are to their environment, and that a transition is enabled regarding how businesses operate. HRD

professionals have a role to play in promoting such increased understanding among employees as well as society at large in order to support a transition (Fien *et al.,* 2009). The ethos of sustainable HRD practice in organizations is essential as increasing environmental problems are putting many organizations at risk.

In fact, during the past decade an increasing number of organizations have been undertaking CSR programs, including various green initiatives. Baric (2017) conducted a review of literature between 2005-2016 regarding CSR programs, stakeholder theory, and information-communication technologies. He concluded that CSR programs had evolved during that time from being viewed as a potentially burdensome undertaking that corporations only reluctantly undertook to being viewed as an undertaking which is critical to an organization's success. He concluded that as companies increasingly are globalized the number of stakeholders increases, and CSR programs provide a way of addressing varied interests of these stakeholders, companies use CSR programs to differentiate themselves from competitors for their stakeholders thereby gaining competitive advantages for themselves.

Collier & Esteban (2007) discuss that corporations are organized so that external risks created by business operations are borne by societal stakeholders. Whereas individual countries may have legal frameworks which can address the cost of risks created by corporations, the increasing globalization has resulted in risks being transferred externally to society. This is because, in 2007 at the time of their article, (Collier & Esteban, 2007) there was no global international legal framework which held corporations accountable for their "external" risks such as various negative environmental consequences. Three years later, in 2010, the ISO 26000 framework was released to provide an international guiding framework for corporations to engage in environmentally sustainable development practices (Wikipedia, 2019). A 2015 study (Toppinen *et al.,* 2015) examining the sustainable development practices among a number of global forestry companies found that the majority of the companies had already changed their practices in accordance with what was suggested by the ISO 26000 framework. The authors therefore concluded that the framework was unlikely to provide added value, at least in the forestry sector, because the companies had already changed their practices prior to the introduction of the framework. Since there is no legal requirement for complying with the framework, and there are no penalties, it is interesting to note that many corporations examined by Toppinen *et al.* (2015) chose to engage in the sustainable practices as suggested by the framework. What motivated them to change? What advantages did they see to engaging in sustainable practices?

How can Green HRD Benefit Organizations?

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The motivation for companies to go green can vary. For example, a 2009 study (Berns *et al.,* 2009) found that in the USA three reasons motivated companies to become more environmentally sustainable: government regulations, consumer preferences, and employee preferences. Spector (2013) states that while in the USA government regulations are the primary motivator for companies to change, in Europe customer preferences are the primary motivator for going green. Awareness of such international differences is of strategic value for globally operating businesses, and therefore, HRD professionals would be involved in designing and implementing, HRD programs accordingly.

Another significant change with which organizations must contend arises out of demographic trends. In a Ted Talk Strack (2014) discussed the demographic shift saying it will result in a situation where labor demand will be greater than labor supply. He mentioned that a survey of 200,000 people expressed certain culture-related preferences regarding what they were looking for in an ideal workplace. Similarly, Wieland & Nair (2016) found that millennials (those people who were born between 1980-1999) have different preferences than the baby boomers (those people born between 1945-1964). The baby boomer generation were generally accustomed to working in organizations where rules of the organization were followed and workers were expected to leave family and other personal concerns behind. However, millennials have entirely different expectations. Companies which do not adjust to these different expectations will have difficult times attracting people from a shrinking supply of workers. According to Wieland & Nair (2016), the expectations millennials have of companies include

- wanting work-life balance in addition to earning money;
- being able to acknowledge them as individuals who are valued (by peers, supervisors, and the organization); and
- work values must be congruent with their personal values.

Wieland & Nair (2016) summarize various studies that discuss the expectations of millennials. In order to attract millennials a company must:

- demonstrate ethical practice;
- demonstrate social responsibility;
- demonstrate social engagement; and
- create work conditions that enable flexibility (for workers) and provide a way that workers can feel fulfilled by their jobs.

Millennials want to know they are making a positive difference in the world somehow, according to Wieland & Nair (2016), and they want to do it in a way that satisfies their personal value system (concern for family, social well-being, and the environment).

The newest generation to enter the workforce – Generation Z– also demand attention to environmental sustainability and more generally CRS. Generation Z is defined as those individuals born between 1996-2010), although there is disagreement about the exact date range for this age cohort (Rodriguez, Boyer, Fleming & Cohen, 2019). The characteristics of generation Z relevant to this discussion include the following:

- Have a low tolerance for ambiguity and adverse conditions (Rodriguez *et al.,* 2019)
- want job and personal growth want job and personal growth, but they also want to have considerable flexibility so they can pursue their other interests outside of work (Rodriguez *et al.,* 2019)
- material rewards are not a priority; rather they prefer environments that afford conveniences according to their personal preferences and values (Gugueva & Fetisova, 2016; Sokolova & Lobanova, 2012; cited in Jakel & Borshchevskiy, 2019)
- they tend to be easily frustrated when they don't receive the immediate gratification they expect (Pew, 2014)
- are less likely to be in the workforce, and they are slower to enter the workforce (Pew, 2014)
- tend to have an entrepreneurial attitude which makes them more likely to look for another job when they encounter something that they do not like or which is incongruent with their personal values (Rodriguez *et al.,* 2019)
- are more accepting of racial, cultural and other differences (Pew, 2014)

This newest generation is just entering the workplace and will result in a situation where some workplaces may have four generations working together. Issues such as recruiting, retention, motivation, and leadership will be of high importance given the various interests and expectations arising from the various generations working in organizations. HRD professionals competent in modern recruiting methods, various transactional HR processes, and competent in transformational HR initiatives are key to enabling organizations to attain superior results.

The Role of GHRD in Ensuring Business Objectives
According to Borggraefe (2016), in a corporate organizational structure it is the area called corporate governance that would include issues such as CSR (and green HRD). Governance refers to a set of rules and practices through which an organization establishes accountability, transparency, and fairness in its dealings with its stakeholders (Borggraefe, 2016). Governance includes abiding by laws and regulations; however, some scholars also define governance to include ethical business operations, according to Borggraefe (2016).

Borggraefe (2016) adds that HR staff can influence compliance with governance frameworks in

several key areas which focus on compliance systems and processes in organizations. These areas are

- recruitment;
- performance management systems;
- disciplinary case management (how they are conducted and results communicated); and
- training (Borggraefe, 2016).

Why is CSR relevant for recruitment? Wieland & Nair (2016) discuss a number of ways in which CSR in general, and GHRD in particular affect recruitment. For example, Wieland and Nair (2016) discuss that knowledge workers need to be dealt with differently than unskilled laborers, even if both categories of employees are millennials. This is because research by a number of scholars (Alvesson, 2000; & Flood *et al.,* 2001, as cited in Wieland & Nair, 2016) has shown knowledge workers expect their values to be met through their work, they expect to have flexibility, and they expect to be able to use their creativity. Therefore, Wieland & Nair (2016) say organizations must address these requirements of knowledge workers if they wish to attract, retain, and engage this type of worker productively.

Wieland & Nair (2016) also discuss that people have become fed up with various business scandals, and that there is a backlash resulting from a society that emphasizes continuous consumption. One result they note is that people react positively to the authenticity of leaders and organizational practices. An organization's perceived authenticity is also relevant to labor markets because workers who bring their own personal values to work will find themselves conflicted if a corporation demands that work be performed in a manner which is somehow incongruent with the personal values of the workers. This will affect attractions, hiring, and retention, as well as motivation. HRD staff can provide valuable guidance to leaders from supervisors to executives on these issues. Furthermore, HRD professionals have the expertise to design, implement, and evaluate programs that address strategic objectives such as recruitment in order to help organizations achieve their strategic objectives in an authentic and congruent manner.

It is critical that CSR programs be seen as authentic and not just as a quick fix to appease some inconvenient voices. Care in designing and implementing CSR programs affects employees' judgements about the authenticity of corporate CSR programs. The authenticity of an organization's CSR program affects employee commitment, and thereby the productivity that an organization can achieve is impacted (Lee and Yoon, 2018). Furthermore, Collier & Esteban (2007) review literature that shows employees' commitment toward, and participation in, organizational ethical and CSR objectives depends on three factors. The first factor is the extent to which employees derive their identity from being a part of an organization.

Employees will identify with and adopt organizational characteristics as part of their own identities if the employees find those organizational characteristics to be attractive and congruent with their own values (Collier & Esteban, 2007). The second factor is employees' perceptions about justice and fairness in the organization. Organizations with a high degree of procedural justice internally, and organizations where violators are held to account will result in a high degree of commitment toward, and participation in, ethical and CSR programming (Collier & Esteban, 2007). In fact, the authors point out that when low levels of procedural justice and low levels of accountability are present, the research shows it is more likely that unethical conduct will occur. The third factor affecting participation in CSR programs is the degree of ethical leadership demonstrated unequivocally by senior leadership in an organization (Collier & Esteban, 2007). As a result, it is clear that HRD professionals have a role to play to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of CSR programs. Attending to the evidence about commitment toward CSR objectives (Collier & Esteban, 2007; & Lee & Yoon, 2018) will ensure that employees will be optimally committed and engaged in CSR initiatives, which in turn will influence perceptions of authenticity and congruence by potential future employees (Wieland & Nair, 2016). Employees' genuine commitment to the goals and objectives of organizations are depend on the interpretation made by those employees that the organizational practices (as demonstrated by HR practitioners, managers, and executives) are authentic.

Two Canadian researchers, McShane & Cunningham (2011), found that employees form judgements about the authenticity of CSR programs by looking at two factors. First, they compared the organization's characterization of itself as put forward by the CSR program to their own interpretation of the actual characteristics of the organization, as judged by the employees. In other words, did the CSR program accurately reflect the true nature of the organization, as interpreted by the employees? This interpretation could be affected, for example by the degree to which an organization committed resources in a tangible and meaningful way in support of the CSR program. Secondly, the employees conducted an ongoing interpretation based on the comparison of the CSR program against the socially constructed and evolving norms of what a CSR program should be. The authors found that if a judgement of inauthenticity was formed by employees, then loyalty and commitment among those employees were negatively affected.

Practical Real World Applications of GHRD

So far we have seen reasons provided by various scholars regarding why corporations might want to consider to become more green, and in particular how HRD could assist in this transformation process. Next some examples will be discussed that show what

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some corporations have done to become more environmentally sustainable.

One method involves supply chain management. As globalization has increased the supply chains have become global in nature. Managing the supply chains for efficiency and consistency provides improvements in profits. HRD professionals are key resources to assist in strategic planning, creating corporate cultures, creating performance management systems, developing accountability systems, recruiting, and other organization development and performance programs that are pro-green in nature.

Green supply chain management is an approach that concerns itself with more than just profit motivation of corporations. A green supply chain management approach looks also at how products or services can be provided in a sustainable way. For example, Canciglieri Junior *et al.* (2018) discuss literature about product development which is linked to green supply chain management. In this approach decisions about product development are made in conjunction with selecting suppliers so that environmental sustainability is emphasized throughout various processes involved in developing products in a green way.

Wognum & Bremmers (2009) discuss environmentally sustainable supply chain management in the food industry. They argue that the food supply chain has to become more transparent, not only to demonstrate food safety, but also environmental sustainability in order to ensure consumer trust and confidence in food products. By demonstrating care of the environment in a transparent manner the value of the food supply chain is increased. In Europe legislation was enacted in 2002 which requires, among other things, traceability of all parts of the food supply chain. However, the authors state that full traceability does not exist, and that there is a lack of standardization and consistency with regard to traceability (Wognum & Bremmers (2009). Full traceability increases costs due to the necessity of using additional technology, and modifying various processes, and such costs are not easily transferred to consumers (Wognum & Bremmers, 2009). The authors stated that as of the time of writing their article only certain high value specialty products or products with small supply chains had full traceability. Creating full traceability produces a competitive advantage, according to Wognum & Bremmers (2009). The authors point to organic products which tout their supply chain traceability with respect to environmental impact as a way to differentiate themselves from other products, addressing the interests of a particular market segment.

To achieve full traceability all the stakeholders in the supply chain must each be able to individually demonstrate their environmental concern, and these stakeholders must be able to act in concert with each other to ensure the entire supply chain is conveying a coherent message about its environmental sustainability (Wognum & Bremmers, 2009).

An example of a sustainable supply chain management process is provided by Spector (2013) who discusses the process McDonalds created. To adopt green practices, McDonalds created the Supply Chain Working Group in 2006 to transform not only itself, but also its supply chain partners. The joint objective was to be more environmentally sustainable in their operations and products they each provided in the supply chain. This transformation was achieved without sacrificing corporate profits (Spector, 2013), indicating that profitability and sustainable practices can go hand in hand without sacrificing one for the other.

These examples of green supply chain management show how a corporation can achieve environmentally sustainable operations by viewing its operations in a larger context which goes beyond the boundaries of any single company. Several scholars have discussed that, in fact, to become environmentally sustainable organizations must take a broader view that focuses not only on their own operations, but they must also look at the operations of their partners and other stakeholders. One such approach is called transdisciplinary engineering (TE) (ISTE, 2019), also known as concurrent engineering (CE) (Peruzzini *et al.,* 2018). TE is concerned with considering all phases of a product's lifecycle, including consideration of the extended networks of entities involved in the creation of the products, and also considering environmental impacts throughout the entire lifecycle of the product. The TE approach attempts to increase effectiveness and efficiency, and to reduce loss and errors throughout the entire product lifecycle. This approach is transdisciplinary and acknowledges that no single field of knowledge can solve complex problems that are increasingly global in nature (Peruzzini *et al.,* 2018).

A related concept called industrial symbiosis is discussed by Scafa *et al.* (2018). These authors state that linear models of economic development have become obsolete and that economies should be thought of as "circular economies" (p. 1184). In a circular economy the use of resources is maximized and waste is ideally zero. To accomplish this stakeholders must work together in planning their operations and working effectively together as one large ecosystem (Scafa *et al.,* 2018). Large scale implementations of a TE or circular economy approach require not just planning, but also change management and organization development programs. These are the purview of HRD professionals.

Finally, an approach called "creating shared value" (CSV) is described by Bee, Diby *et al.* (2015). The authors describe how Nestle, an internationally operating company created a CSV council to manage

and ensure the security of environmental, social, and economic interests for Nestle and its various stakeholders such as suppliers and communities in which they operate. The CSV council consists of external experts in fields such as corporate strategy, nutrition, water and rural development. Through this council Nestle attempts to devise strategies which provide corporate benefits and also benefits to other stakeholders, including communities in which they operate, or to which they market their products. According to the authors the CSV approach was developed by Harvard Professors Michael Porter and Mark Kramer as a way of making a company competitive over the long term (Bee *et al.,* 2015). A detailed discussion of how Nestle operationalized the CSV approach is found in Bee *et al.* (2015).

The conceptual approaches noted above – green supply chain management, transdisciplinary engineering/ concurrent engineering, circular economies, and CSV – all require more than technical ability or financial management excellence. They require the ability of people to work effectively with other people (i.e. soft skills), the design of effective work processes, and they require organization development initiatives – all of which are the purview of HRD professionals.

Barriers to Green Transformational Change in Organizations

Next we turn the discussion to the possible barriers which prevent organizations from employing a GHRD approach, or even from adopting a broader socially responsible approach in their operations. While many scholars have suggested that organizations can act in an environmentally responsible manner, can operate in ways to reduce poverty, and can achieve high ethical standards (Firdaus & Udin, 2014; Matten & Moon, 2008; Garavan & McGuire, 2010; & Alvarado & Toledo, 2017), it is evident that not all companies adopt policies, practices and procedures in support of such broad objectives. What prevents organizations from adopting a socially and environmentally responsible way of operating?

Organizations have different approaches in how they attempt to achieve social responsibility. Bierema & D'Abundo (2003) discuss three such approaches. Some organizations have traditionally had the approach of "minimum legal compliance". This approach sees that an organization is responsible, above all else, to achieve as much profits as possible for its shareholders, no matter the cost as long as the minimum required compliance with legal requirements is provided. As noted above, Spector (2013) commented that this approach appears to be prevalent in the USA. Another approach that Bierema & D'Abundo (2003) call "enlightened self-interest" sees corporations engage in CSR activities because it will help the organization directly or indirectly. For example, this approach would

pursue CSR in order to attract or retain employees, improve its public reputation, achieve long-term corporate goals. Such an approach is a strategic, long-term approach. A third approach is called "proactive change". In this approach organizations adopt CSR initiatives, going beyond mere legal compliance, and going beyond self-interest, so that they can participate in the improvement of society in some way (Stahl and Grigsby, 1997, cited in Bierema & D'Abundo, 2003). This approach is exemplified by the CSV approach developed by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer (Bee *et al.,* 2015). According to this categorization of CSR approaches proposed by Bierema & D'Abundo (2003), corporate leaders must make an honest assessment of how their practices measure up. Even if they do not, the public, and current and potential future employees will. Failure to have policies, practices and procedures which are congruent with public statements made by organizations will result in judgements that the organizations and their leadership team are inauthentic. Such a judgement can result in decreased employee engagement, productivity, and can affect recruiting and retention of skilled employees who are pro-green.

The urgency of addressing environmental sustainability has increased according to Anderson (2009). The author says that during the industrial era much of the impact from industrial activities could be addressed and regulated within national boundaries. However, increasing globalization and the transition to a post-industrial society has changed who can impact climate change. The resulting environmental impacts from a post-industrial society have meant that no single nation can address environmental sustainability on its own. Transnational corporations with complex global supply chains have created a situation where a global response is required (Anderson, 2009). The author points out that current development practices are no longer sustainable, and in fact, we may have passed the threshold of recovery from environmental damage perpetrated by global business practices. Therefore, a different business paradigm is required (Anderson, 2009).

Referring to Giddens (1994); & Anderson (2009) argues that it is the emphasis on what Giddens (1994) called "Productivism" that has led us, in part, to our current situation. Anderson argues that a change is required. According to Giddens, productivism refers to when personal growth and development have been replaced by the primacy of achieving economic wealth and benefit by way of full-time paid employment. Productivism, argues Giddens, is the result of capitalist society where consumption is heavily emphasized as well as production of goods. Giddens argues it is problematic that consumption is heavily emphasized in most modern economies because economies which are based on ongoing consumption contribute to the deterioration of environmental conditions. They also result in a society where many people do not feel

worthy unless the consume for the sake of consuming to demonstrate what they have consumed and accumulated (Giddens, 1994). Therefore, he argues that productivism "must be actively and widely problematized" (Giddens, 1994). This will result in questioning the consumeristic behaviors and practices associated with productivism which will challenge the fundamental assumption that paid work is required, and the meaning of paid work itself. However, in arguing against productivism, Giddens is not arguing against ongoing economic development; he is arguing against the unbridled consumption of resources and commodification of work for the sole purpose of neoliberal economic development. The purpose of work, he says, should be happiness. Yet in modern society that purpose has been shifted from valuing happiness, personal development and well-being to productivism which values consumeristic behavior. Anderson argues that this productivism has resulted in education and training being increasingly influenced by neoliberal pressures to ensure that education and training institutions support economic objectives. These influences include increasing "privatization, commercialization, and marketization of its provision and financing" (Anderson, 2009). As a result of neoliberal influences, and as a result of the increasing adoption of human capital theory, most curriculum design "is based on Taylorist technical-rational, 'training needs analysis', in which the sole frame of reference is the workplace" (Anderson, 2009). The goal of these activities is ultimately to enhance the economic success of organizations, and all other possible goals that might be considered are subordinated. Anderson states that the needs and interests of the individual and of society have been pushed aside to ensure the needs and interests of industry are met Anderson (2009) argues that failing to question the assumptions underlying productivism, or to even be aware of them, results in the reproduction of "agents of productivism" at higher education institutions (Anderson, 2009).

Similarly *et al.* (2017) argue that a major reason for the occurrence of global environmental damage is the economic activity of humans. Anderson (2009) challenges the underlying assumptions that sustain neoliberal productivist objectives and interests, and that a different way of thinking is possible. Anderson calls for a decoupling of HRD solutions from the neoliberal economic prime imperatives that are so prevalent currently, in favor of adopting more holistic approaches. For example, he argues that pursuing outcomes such as social well-being and environmental sustainability while also pursuing economic objectives would be a better approach for society and the environment. Anderson (2009) argues that "ecological sustainability must become the organizing principle of human development" (Anderson, 2009). As discussed above, a broader view of corporate activity must be used. Valentin (2017) stressed the importance of adopting a multidisciplinary perspective which includes

not just the immediate organization, but also the entire value chain and stakeholder ecosystem. HRD professionals are in a position to facilitate the processes and activities required for organizations to transition to such a broader way of understanding the interdependent nature of their operations. Change, leadership, strategic planning, organization development and performance improvement are all the purvue of HRD professionals.

CONCLUSION

Public media accounts, based on scientific evidence, have convinced many of the urgent need for people to live in a more environmentally sustainable manner. The global climate protests occurring throughout 2019 are evidence that an increasing number of the public want change. The preceding pages have shown that HRD professionals, taking a strategic approach and focusing on sustainability, can help businesses be profitable while also operating in a sustainable way.

As described above, GHRD represents an extension of both HRD and SHRD. This is because whereas HRD involves looking at internal business processes, strategies and various needs of businesses, and whereas SHRD includes looking at needs of immediate stakeholders with whom a company deals, transitioning to a GHRD philosophy involves a transformation to an even broader scope in how a corporation sees itself and operates in terms of environmentally friendliness and sustainable practices. To fully implement a meaningful GHRD philosophy a corporation is required to look beyond its immediate stakeholders to a much broader network of actors involved in the corporate ecosystem, and it must concern itself with how each of those actors is operating. Accordingly, a corporation that wants to claim it is operating in a sustainable fashion must satisfy itself that the actors in the extended network are also operating in a sustainable manner. In principle, when a network operates together in a synergistic manner, the entire network gains value. Furthermore, when a corporation engages in a sustainability program (which would include a green agenda) such as the "creating shared value" approach described above, the corporation situates itself as a socially responsible actor to ensure value for society at large.

However, a fully green implementation of organizational HRD strategies, such as creating shared value or transdisciplinary engineering requires more than having companies attend to using less photocopier toner or paper. More is required of companies than touting the number of dollars spent on their green or CSR programs. Yet these are some tokenistic approaches to which some companies still resort in 2020. Faced with increasing competition for human resources, how do various organizations in Canada, the USA, and elsewhere rate their CSR operations? As noted above, younger generations entering the

workforce want certain things, including environmentally sustainable operations. Therefore, organizations must transform themselves to be competitive and to thrive. HRD professionals can play a central role in such transformations.

DECLARATIONS

Funding: No funding or other support was received in relation to writing this article.

Conflicts of Interest/Competing Interests: No conflicts of interest declared.

Availability of Data and Material: Not relevant for this article.

Code Availability: Not applicable.

Authors' Contributions: Both authors contributed equally to writing this article, including initial and subsequent drafts, as well as the final version submitted for consideration to be published.

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