The core of CSR is corporate sustainability

企业社会责任的探讨——社会责任讲座系列报道（之二）

2012年，已经有越来越多在中国的企业将“企业社会责任”摆上议程。但“社会责任”这一概念对于大部分在中国的企业来依然是非常新的领域。“企业社会责”任在中国的环境下应该怎样被理解和实践，如何实现企业社会责任的可持续发展也将成为越来越多的企业要面对的严峻挑战。这一期的《caring》也将继续为大家呈现瑞士文化教育处在2011年“社会责任”系列讲座中关于“企业社会责任”的讨论。
Last June swissnex China, Pro Helvetia and Minsheng Art Museum held a series of lectures on corporate social responsibility. Dr Stephan P. Rothlin, a well-known scholar on the subject, spoke about how CSR activities should be carried out in China. Robert Larsson, head of the ABB Discrete Automation and Motion Division, North Asia and China, shared ABB's experience of CSR undertakings in China.

"Unfortunately we read more news about big companies' PR crisis these days. We cannot say that their crisis is due to their lack of social responsibility in China. A PR expert once said the key to preventing a PR crisis is not to do something afterwards but to do something before it happens. Doing CSR activities can help a company to avoid PR crisis," Rothlin said.

Larsson described ABB's CSR initiatives in China, saying ABB is a pioneer in implementing corporate social responsibility worldwide. The company's slogan is to contribute to a better world through productivity and reduce negative impact on the environment for sustainable development. He said ABB China follows three bottom lines in business operation: Economy, Society and Environment, and it is trying to involve all stakeholders to help it realize its CSR commitment as ABB believes people like to work for companies with a good culture.

ABB set high standards for its products and it spends a lot of time to educate its Chinese suppliers, urging them to organize employees to do social and charity work. ABB believes that the core of CSR is to establish a good relationship between human beings and the nature. Larsson also noted the difficulty of implementing CSR as ABB China has more than 25,000 suppliers in the country. It is a huge task to educate them on environmental protection.

Dr. Rothlin said CSR should be treated as a commitment to right business ethics. But one must have right values in order to understand the business ethics. He said his mission is to deliver the right values to people and urge them to apply those values in business and daily life.

Even in the age of economic globalization, there are still differences between the East and West in business ethics. Rothlin cited a Shanghai Jiao Tong University survey that says 39 percent of business schools in China offer courses on business ethics. The percentage is much higher compared with European business schools. "We see the emphasis on localization when companies enter a new market, but there should also be an emphasis on sharing values and ethics of different cultures," he said. "I tend to think that the unique contribution of Asian values, especially Indian and Chinese, are still overlooked.

CSR doesn't necessarily mean giving to charity. Mother Teresa always said: "No one can sincerely help another without helping himself." The ultimate purpose of CSR is to ensure the sustainable development of a company.