

Ethics and Social Justice



ABSTRACT

There are a lot of non-profit groups and organizations around the globe established for a cause that is non-profitable to support a need in the society. Examples of non-profit organizations may include public learning institutions, political organizations, public hospitals, and labor unions. In their operation, ethics and social justice becomes imperative to ensure that the rule of law is followed. They are formed and organized under state law in the United States, where some groups enjoy the federal government charter. These groups include the American Boys Scouts and the Red Cross which is based in America. These organizations do not function with the objective of creating income, but are financed from outside sources. They are governed by laws that regulate their operations within and without the borders to ensure the rule of law. This study will discuss and analyze ethical and social justice issues of American Red Cross Society, a non-profit organization.

INTRODUCTION

The American Red Cross is categorized as a humanitarian organization, whose chief objective is to provide education, disaster relief, and emergency assistance (American Red Cross 2012). Within its domestic services, it offers the following assistance to the community: the collection and consequent distribution of blood to patients in need, processing of blood products for clinical use, carrying out community educational programs on safety, health, and disaster preparedness. In addition, the organization has programs that

focus on international development and relief. The organizations operations are administered by volunteers and funded by well wishers donations. Income generated from blood products, safety training programs, and health help in fueling its operations (American Red Cross 2012).

The organization is a nationwide network with more than 36 regions that offer blood services, education in disaster management and preparedness. They also offer medical services to the community. It enjoys more than a million unpaid assistants and approximately 30,000 employees, who, annually, mobilize and allocate relief to the affected persons. In all these regions, the organization trains about twelve million persons in necessary and basic medical skills. Internationally, the organization lends a hand to victims of various disasters and in places of conflict. It is recorded that every year the organization responds to at least 70, 000 disasters. This includes floods, hurricanes, explosions, apartment's fires, earthquakes, and other man-made and natural disasters (American Red Cross 2012).

The American Red Cross is not established as a government agency. However, its administrative authority to administer relief in disaster stricken areas is formalized in a congressional charter, which was provided in 1905. Nonetheless, the charter is not a provision of autonomous power, but a grant of obligations and duty towards the community. Their relief centers its attention on addressing the people's immediate and urgent needs caused by unforeseen tragedy. When a looming disaster strikes, the organization moves in to provide basic necessities that are food, shelter and health services to victims. Moreover, they offer assistance to individuals and families to pick up them-selves from where they left off before the occurrence that disrupted their normal life (American Red Cross 2012).

ETHICAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

In every organization, ethics and social justice have great importance to uphold its uprightness, in the face of the society (Williams 2009). The internal moral behavior, and the overall social output of one's ethics in terms, of behavior, can have extreme consequences to an organization if not well considered. In a social environment, everyone is expected to develop and exhibit moral ethics that regulate the concept of right and wrong in the adjudication of one's duties (Slote 2010). From an ethical point of view, everyone should acquire good habits, which enable a person to follow and carry out the duties beforehand within the expected social justice.

The governing arm of the American Red Cross is spearheaded by a board of governors that oversee all the affairs of the organization's operations. It operates under given principles that ensure proper application of set ethical standards. Ethical standards in this organization enable proper and equitable allocation of its services. The organizations moral conducts are founded on the congressional charter that was awarded in 1905. In this charter, its initial objective is described, and the organization develops social ethics that will enable it achieve the set objectives. As a social organization that has achieved its charter, and enjoys a cordial relationship with the federal government, it has developed social ethics that would avoid political interference in its operation. There is every temptation to act out of political persuasions, but well laid principles of ethics ensure that operation ethics are adhered.

Within its operations, the organization has had many social justice issues that cost it a lot of money. One of the controversies was on the prohibition of blood donation from men who have intimacy with fellow men. This act was in contravention of the social ethical expectations that require equal justice while treating everybody. They have been petitioning to compel the organization collect blood donated from homosexuals, although to no avail. Justice should be the first virtue of every institution that seeks to address the community without any biases whatsoever. Without justice, then the organization may fail to address every objective within its mandate effectively or justly. The human rights toward these groups of people were violated because they should enjoy

equal treatment regardless of their affiliations.

Under the preamble declaration of human rights, every human being has the right of expression in belief and freedom of fear (Gosepath 2007). The gay people felt their rights were under contempt, and resolved to play the activist role to ensure that their rights are not contravened. Under the rule of law, all rights are protected with the aim of making sure that every person exercises freedom and be treated equally without being judged from ones gender point of view. Under the human rights, every person has to reaffirm their commitment to the charter on fundamental human rights (Gosepath 2007).

It is perceived under the laws of the land that all are equal regardless of gender, color, religion, political persuasions, and status. When men who have intimacy with other men were prohibited from donating blood on the basis of equality, their social equality is overlooked (Kraut 2010). They feel discriminated from the general public by being disallowed to participate in an exercise that is of common good. Although equality is a contested idea, the fast task is first and foremost to put everyone on the same platform and treat them equally. Social justice should remind everyone of common humanity that we share (Nickel 2012).

In terms of liberty, the group experienced obstacles while exercising their social obligation of donating blood. This was so because they came to a place that an obstacle was placed based on their gender. They were not allowed to act within their rights and realize their individual fundamental purposes. While members of a given affiliation are hindered from active participation in a communal course, then their liberty has been violated (Cartel 2012). They were not able to take control of their decisions because there was an obstacle placed between them and their duty.

On other ethical issues, there has been political interference to the development of policies that govern the operations. An executive head was accused of overruling the organizations professional staff while at the same time ordering an AIDS prevention guidebook to be amended to include condom use, homosexuality, and premarital sex. The executive was accused of

breaching the code of conduct and allowing political persuasions control the decision disregarding the set standards of the organizations.

One of the most intriguing issues is based, on the accusation of some of the organizations workers, and volunteers, when it was alleged that they engaged, in theft and fraud in 2006. In this issue, ethics as a virtue is breached by the employees while carrying out their duties. The workers, volunteers, and contractors went against the moral conducts that an organization has to demonstrate. Every worker in a company should have the internal moral values that direct them without the usual follow-up from the seniors (Fieser 2003). When a person does not have self driven moral conducts, there will always be the tendency to do that which is wrong. This is exactly what happened in this incidence. They lacked what Aristotle refers as “good ethics”.

The discipline of ethics requires that everyone should act in accordance of the virtues that are good. The organization failed in its education to its workers and volunteers on the importance of ethics. Ethics should be deeply rooted, in every person, to achieve good results in the organization. It is the place where one does not need the law to do that which is good. Only at this place that an organization can achieve the set moral conduct, without which, every operation will be prone to scandals. There should be a moral duty in everyone to do that which is permissible in the moral sense, where ones conduct should be judged, not on the corporate level, but on the individual level.

CHALLENGES PRESENTED TO THE ORGANIZATION

The first challenge presented in the organization is as a result of the case where its workers and volunteers were accused of engaging in fraud and stealing. This was a shocking revelation and one that can tarnish the reputation of the organization. Once the values of an organization are put into question, the people will always tend to distance them-selves from their operation (Gert 2011). The society will begin looking at the organization as being irresponsible because of that one occurrence. It is in the human nature, to want to focus on the bad area of things. An organization is judged as responsible on the basis of

its ability to handle its responsibilities rightly without issues of poor ethical conduct.

On the same breath, the same organization may have an issue to deal with; that of proving to the public that they act independently without the influence of political powers. This is because of the issue connected to the executive, who was accused of being influenced by political powers, to make certain decisions. When this information is put in the public domain, the public may lose considerable trust in its operation. Elements of activism may begin to show up in opposition to interference from political platform. Bearing in mind that this is a charitable organization, donors may begin shying away which may live the organization strained financially.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The organization should begin by reframing its organization structures to ensure proper monitoring of its operation within borders and internationally. Education is another important factor to all the workers and volunteers who wish to help at any time. Ethical values of operation should be communicated to everyone so that a similar situation of fraud can be avoided. Without a proper layout of ethical conducts, it is the nature of people to do what pleases to them (Williams 2009). On the executive level, a proper oversight board committee should be established to ensure that, those on the management level do not develop policies that are influenced politically.

FACTORS THAT WOULD AFFECT IMPLEMENTATION

There are various factors that would affect implementation of the above recommendations. One of the major factors is the aspect of social responsibility of the organization. The organization should feel compelled by its huge responsibility in the society, to undertake the changes. Another factor would be the realization that ethics is a fundamental part that ensures smooth running of any organization. This in like manner, compels them to focus more on education of every volunteer, and do a background check before permitting

anybody to volunteer. A mandatory volunteer background check should be thoroughly implemented.

OUTCOMES

If these proposals were to be executed, the organization would enjoy a public reputation, thereby, increasing donor funding. When donors realize the effort the organization is taking, they would not mind putting their money and resources in its coffers. This would enable the organization to carry out its mandate effectively without much financial strain. In terms of education, it would create an environment of trust from the society, knowing that there is a reliable organization ready to handle any misfortune with integrity, should it happen. The organization would also receive a good reputation when its workers conduct in an ethically manner that is acceptable socially.

CONCLUSION

The study has critically analyzed the American Red Cross organization on the basis of ethics and social justice exhibited in its operation. Ethics is an essential need to any organization as this discussion has pointed. It is imperative to have mechanisms in the organization that would ensure that various principles are followed to maintain the organization's reputation in the society, both domestically and internationally.