



الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
الإجتماعية للمؤسسات
Arabia CSR Network®

Arabia CSR Network

newsletter

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Note from the President & CEO Arabia CSR Network

We concluded the holy month of Ramadan with an enlightening panel discussion, organised with our sister organisation and environmental partner Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) and in association with The Emirates GBC, The Clean Energy Business Council and with strategic support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The panel focused on the sustainable consumption of food and sustainability principles for the food industry; with a view to raising awareness and responsibility about food consumption and wastage during religious and festive seasons. Our 43rd GRI certified training course once again helped organisations with their reporting commitments. Apart from the panel discussion, our sister organisation and partner also commemorated the World Environment Day on June 5 and World Desertification Day on June 17; both are very important dates in the environmental calendar.

According to the United Nations; - current estimates indicate that roughly 83 million people are being added to the world's population every year. Even assuming that fertility levels will continue to decline, the global population is expected to reach 8.6 billion in 2030, 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100, according to the medium-variant projection. So World Population Day on 11 July, which seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues and under the slogan "Family Planning is a Human Right", will also rally people around the world to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights, where family planning was, for the first time, globally affirmed to be a human right. International conferences have also drawn attention to the rights of women about reproduction and family planning. A close analysis of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the international community in September 2015, reveals that some gender issues should be further emphasized in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), so that social justice and gender equality are realized. SDGs and targets are also meant to be adapted to regional, national and local contexts. World Youth Skills Day will fall on 15 July, and I invite our members, partners and collaborators to use these platforms to launch impactful social initiatives.

A final word about the Arabia CSR Awards; - we have received the bulk of the submissions and have shared the same with the jury, who is engaged in reviewing and assessing the submissions. I wish all applicants my very best and eagerly look forward to knowing the 2018 sustainability champions.

I invite our member and readers to avail of the training opportunities available during this relatively quiet season to work towards building the capacity of their workforce.

Register Now for the Arabia CSR Network Upcoming Trainings



CSR Strategy & Leadership Training (English)

CSR Strategy and Leadership Training (English)
25th - 26th July 2018



GRI Standards (English)
14th - 16th August 2018



ARABIA CSR FORUM
2-3 October 2018
Dubai, UAE

Driving Innovation Through the SDGs

The 2018 forum will lift the veil off a most challenging theme; - "Driving Innovation for Sustainable Development Goals". While innovation is well on its way to becoming the guiding strategy of governments and business around the globe, it is nonetheless important to understand the scope of actionable innovation strategies and technological breakthrough with respect to the seventeen SDGs. The 2018 forum will present a galaxy of thought and practice leaders who will share their insights and experiences related to the theme of the forum.



[Register Now!](https://arabiacsnetwork.com/forum-registration/)
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ACSRN News and Events

GRI Standards Training in the month of June

Stock exchanges have a key role in driving sustainability reporting, which is a crucial element for corporate transparency and responsible business practices. The 30 Environmental, Social and Governance metrics published on June 27th by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) represent the best sustainability practice, covering indicators such as emissions, climate risk mitigation, gender pay, human rights, and ethics and anti-corruption. The WFE ESG Guidance and Metrics are fully aligned with the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards). This is good news for the thousands of companies already reporting with GRI.

Arabia CSR Network has been training organisations in sustainability reporting following the GRI guidelines and standards since 2011. Till date, ACSRN has successfully completed 43 such trainings, imparting requisite knowledge and practice skills to more than 400 individuals. The 43rd training was held from June 25th to 27th. The objectives of the training were: To introduce the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards as sustainability reporting standards that can be utilised by companies of all sizes to achieve the following purposes: to provide a clear picture of the main economic, social and environmental impacts of the organisation; to identify risks and opportunities of an organisation's activities; to increase employee engagement and encourage innovation and creation of better solutions; to enhance reputation, increase customer loyalty and community respect and achieve competitive advantage; and to deliver an in depth understanding of the entire process of preparing a sustainability report based on the GRI Standards. The three day training offered a detailed view of the standards, their components and the GRI reporting process, using a certified module developed and certified by GRI.



The specific components of the training were: 'Sustainability Reporting and GRI', 'Overview of GRI Standards', 'GRI Standards', 'Reporting process' and an end of course report review practical exercise. Several exercises and discussions lent additional support to the participants in grasping the nuances of the GRI Standards and how to apply the principles and requirements. The next training will be held from August 14th to the 16th, 2018.

Panel discussion on Food Waste to mark the month of Ramadan

Arabia CSR Network and Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) co-organised a Panel Discussion on the topic of "Zero Waste: Food for Thought?", held on the 27th of June at the Modul University, Dubai. The event was conducted in association with Emirates Green Building Council, Clean Energy Business Council and with strategic support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Reflecting on the virtues of the Holy month of Ramadan, the discussion focused on the importance of sustainable sourcing, production and consumption of food. The event welcomed food expert panelists, who shared unique best practices and challenges within wide-ranging disciplines in promoting sustainability along the food value chain, from farm to fork. As a partner of the 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme of UNEP, EEG initiated the event to strengthen the information platform on sustainable food systems for the open conversation and knowledge sharing amongst producers, consumers and other key stakeholders linked to the food industry.





For the first time in the UAE, the critical topic of sustainable production and consumption of food was strategically covered in full scope, bringing together a diverse panel of speakers, representing government, waste management, hospitality, supermarket retail, and food catering.



Mr. Abdul Aziz Al Midfa, Vice Chair of EEG, moderated the discussion wherein significant questions were raised, such as how overconsumption of food is being tackled through innovative strategies? How have food awareness initiatives influenced the existing policies and regulations? And how have the local entities in the food sector ensured that their food is locally and seasonally sourced? Taking part in the discussion were :

- **Eng. Naji Radhi**, Waste Management and Treatment Expert in Dubai Municipality, emphasising on priority activities and challenges in the reduction of food loss and organic waste
- **Ms. Noura Al Shamsi**, Head of Permits and Applied Nutrition Section, Food Safety Department in Dubai Municipality, highlighting the role of the UAE in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; and the UAE Food Bank initiative
- **Ms. Fatima Ahmad Al Harmoudi**, Senior Public Awareness Officer at the Centre of Waste Management – Abu Dhabi (Tadweer) sharing the awareness campaigns conducted by the Centre to educate the youth on the existing pressure on food resources and change the well-established habits that elevate the irresponsible consumption of food
- Expert panelists from the supermarket retail, hospitality and catering services, **Mr. Huzefa Rupawala**, Regional Manager of Lulu Group International, **Eng. Abdul Quddus Sheikh**, Director of Engineering, Armani Hotel Dubai, and **Ms. Nancy Nouaimh** – Quality, Safety and Performance, Abela & Co, who shared their best practices in line with the promotion of sustainable food systems.
- Amongst the solutions discussed, was the importance of transparent and reliable communication of food product information throughout the supply chain, implementation of compost technologies, use of local grown products and the need for capacity development and awareness sessions for the employees.

Members News

ABB and Heliospectra team up to explore new food production technologies and commercial infrastructure in Middle East and Africa

ABB says it is working with intelligent lighting technology for greenhouse and controlled plant growth environments specialist Heliospectra AB to explore solutions that will boost the productivity and the sustainability of greenhouse and controlled environment agriculture produce industry in the Middle East and Africa. The collaboration will explore new food production technologies and commercial infrastructure, such as light control systems, refrigeration, renewables, robotics and Industry 4.0 digital technologies to increase flexibility, to address increasing demand for sustainable agricultural products while reducing costs and improving capital efficiency, the company said in a statement.

Heliospectra makes advanced light control systems using fully adjustable spectra LED technology, which accelerate food harvest cycles and time to market. It will provide the technical foundation for the new partners' technology co-development. Additionally, the partners will create programmes for educating growers in best practices for sustainable agriculture.

Source: <http://meconstructionnews.com>



Chalhoub Group signs the Women's Empowerment Principles

Chalhoub Group, the leading partner for luxury across the Middle East signed the CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and hence joins the global list of WEPs signatories. By being a signatory of WEP, the Group shows its support to gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community and therefore, will apply the 7 steps of the WEP principles to advance and empower women:

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
- Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
- Promote education, training and professional development for women
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

In line with the Group's sustainable initiatives, Patrick Chalhoub, Co-CEO of the Chalhoub Group commented: "Gender parity is an urgent economic imperative. By being a signatory of Women Empowerment Principles, we pledge to engage both men and women in leadership and execution and to be a role model in the region to cultivate gender balance work environment that supports, empowers and recognises women leaders."

Gender equality has always been a concern for the Chalhoub Group; the Group aims to have an equal balance of women at all levels of the company, this commitment is an integral part of its sustainable strategy in term of diversity and inclusion. Today, 52% of the workforce in the Group is composed of women.

Chalhoub Group is also member of the United Nations Global Compact, and as part of this, the Group has committed to reporting yearly on its achievements. Gender equality has always been a concern for the Chalhoub Group; the Group aims to have an equal balance of women at all levels of the company, this commitment is an integral part of its sustainable strategy in term of diversity and inclusion. Today, 52% of the workforce in the Group is composed of women.

Source: <http://www.chalhoubgroup.com>



DEWA Youth Council launches Youth Sustainability Pledge

Dubai Electricity and Water Authority's Youth Council (DEWA) launched the 'Youth Sustainability Pledge' campaign to highlight the role of youth in supporting the sustainable development process in Dubai and the UAE. It aims to create an interactive platform to listen to the youth's ideas and aspirations. It also promotes spreading a culture of sustainability, which is one of DEWA Youth Council's main pillars. This comes within the framework of DEWA's efforts to support sustainability in all its forms: environmental, social and economic. This also supports DEWA's vision to become a sustainable innovative world-class utility. The campaign lasted for one week and attracted over 500 young participants from inside and outside DEWA. Participants pledged to adopt sustainable lifestyles in line with the vision of the UAE's wise leadership and DEWA's strategic approach to achieve sustainable development while preserving the environment and its natural resources.



"DEWA Youth Council plays a pivotal and effective role in involving the youth in DEWA's efforts to achieve sustainability in all aspects of its work, instilling this culture among UAE youth and contributing to reducing carbon emissions through conservation and enhancing energy efficiency and water. This supports the Demand Side Management Strategy, which aims to reduce energy and water demand by 30% by 2030," said HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO of DEWA.

Source: www.dewa.gov.ae



EGA survey reveals the importance of leadership for UAE organisations looking to increase innovation

A study commissioned by Emirates Global Aluminium, the largest industrial company in the United Arab Emirates outside oil and gas, has shown that leadership teams within the country's organisations hold the key to unlocking more innovation from their workforce.

The good news for organisations across the UAE is that employees feel as though they have a personal responsibility to support their employers by coming up with innovative new ways of working. Nearly three quarters (74%) agreed that this was something that should simply be expected of them at their places of work. Key to organisations wishing to unlock innovation is having clear and engaging schemes for gathering ideas from around the business, according to the survey.

Despite employees' strong commitment to innovation, many reported that they did not feel empowered to innovate. More than half of all respondents (59%) said they had an innovative idea in the past year, but were unsure of how to submit or whom to tell. Additionally, 37% believed senior management would not value one of their ideas even if it was put into practice, and another 40% reported that their organisations do not give them the freedom to suggest new ideas. These findings reveal that many members of staff want to contribute to their companies, but do not feel as though they work in an environment which encourages their participation.

If senior leadership succeeded in creating a more welcoming environment, employees would be motivated to contribute, they said. The vast majority of workers, some 89 per cent, felt they would be more motivated to innovate at work if they knew they would be personally recognised by their CEOs and thanked for their contribution. This is particularly true of the youngest members of the workforce, people between 18-24 years old, who said they would be most motivated (90 per cent) by this gesture.

Source: <https://www.ega.ae>



wasl Joins people of the UAE in celebrating 'Zayed Humanitarian Day' Initiative

wasl Asset Management Group, one of the largest real estate development and management companies in Dubai, joined various sectors in the UAE to commemorate 'Zayed Humanitarian Day' on 19th Ramadan, which happened to be 4th June of this year. During the holy month, wasl organised a number of events like group Iftars in a number of its projects in Muhaisnah, Ras Al Khor and Qusais, where the company provided more than 15,000 meals, including 500 that were distributed daily during Ramadan. The philanthropists behind this initiative were keen to welcome as many people in need as possible for iftar to recall the generous attributes of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, our founding father.



wasl employees also displayed a spirit of generosity and giving by supporting the Beit Al Khair Society. Throughout Ramadan, the society had collaborated with wasl to fill as many donation boxes as possible with employees' clothes, books, and household items. As a result, the company succeeded in collecting dozens of boxes that the Beit Al Khair Society will be distributing to families in need.

wasl emphasised the increasing numbers and diversities of its charitable activities to ensure that the largest number of beneficiaries is reached and assisted in order to meet the objectives of the 'Year of Zayed' initiative, and to celebrate the spiritual values of the holy month, as well as consolidate the good principles that were set by the late Sheikh Zayed among the people of the UAE.

Source: <https://www.wasl.ae>



Feature, Blogs, White papers, Articles...

Has Environmental Sustainability Lost its Relevance?

Companies have thought for decades about business-focused solutions to fix the deteriorating environment. But judging by continually rising waters and temperatures, we may need a rethink about what sustainability means, suggest participants at a recent conference at Harvard Business School. A report by co-organizer Geoffrey Jones.



For businesses and other organizations seeking to overcome roadblocks to sustainability over the last few decades, much can be learned from the debates I heard at the recent Harvard Business School conference, *Understanding and Overcoming Roadblocks to*

Sustainability, which assembled a stellar cast of practitioners, management researchers, and business and environmental historians.

As co-organizer of the event with HBS Professor Amy Edmondson and Swedish business historian Anki Bergquist, I was thrilled as the participants engaged in a deep dive into why environmental fundamentals continue to deteriorate sharply despite decades of talk about business and sustainability. Participants eschewed focusing on the handful of win/win cases to explore why attention to environmental sustainability is just plain hard. Some of the major issues identified: the power of vested interests, the alleged short-term nature of capital markets, and the way the human thought process works.

Overcoming roadblocks requires public policies to be much more aligned with creating the right incentives to support long-term commitments and radical shifts at the same time, and business might be the only entity that can effectively lobby to pass such policy. It's time to revisit the assumption, one speaker argued, that sustainability can be reconciled with economic growth. A number of practitioners reported that progress could and was being made in their sectors, despite the challenges. Many are focusing energy on addressing short-term biases in capital markets and in the ability of investors to guide and prompt corporate boards to reduce their environmental impact. In the eco-tourism field, impressive companies are developing advanced methods for both measuring and countering environmental impact.

Solutions becoming more complex

However, the more speakers considered the business system as a whole—or even more broadly what several speakers called Earth Systems—the more challenging and complex the solutions

became. For instance, what's the use of a zero-waste and carbon-free island resort in a world headed toward a temperature rise of 4 degrees Celsius?

Management studies itself was seen by some speakers as part of the problem, rather than offering practitioners viable solutions. Three decades of writers asserting that win-win solutions were possible had made it all seem too easy to achieve results, when it's not. Sustainability has become reconciled with success in generating profits, rather than focusing on preventing further deterioration of the natural environment. Worse, and surprising to many with decades of experience in sustainable business, some members of the new generation seem to be espousing the ideas this field began with: that eco-efficiency (energy savings, waste reduction, and green design) is a “free lunch” solution and the best path forward. But are small operational fixes like lighting retrofits meaningful in a climate-changed world, or are they necessary but wildly insufficient?

The very concept of sustainability was indeed critiqued by many speakers as having become a major roadblock. Partly, this is due to the broadening of the concept since it emerged in the 1980s, but as one practitioner astutely pointed out, the imprecision of sustainability discourse has led businesses to understand the very definition and metrics of “sustainable business” as a competitive space. Speakers called for more rigorous exploration of the choices that needed to be constantly made in progress toward less environmentally damaging corporate practices, and identified the great limitations of research and data on which to make such choices. We have no measure of the cost of the extinction of a species, for example. The continued lack of transparency in corporate reporting, and the lack of hard research on the impact of investing, was noted by speakers. The system-wide nature of sustainability challenges requires system-wide solutions, and especially new and holistic ways of thinking.

What can businesses do now?

The identification of sustainability as a system-wide problem raised the question of what individual business leaders could do. There were calls for a new wave of corporate environmentalism, which would assertively lobby for new environmental policies. The group's exercise of voice, in the manner of the National Rifle Association, was considered one essential path forward. Such a path would move the business community beyond its default tendency to focus on itself, on improved plant operations, or carbon footprint reduction, and instead recognize, as BlackRock CEO Larry Fink recently pointed out, the broader role of business in improving society as a whole.

Article Source: written by GEOFFREY G. JONES, Isidor Straus Professor of Business History, Harvard Business School.



Case Study from the Archive - Salalah Methanol Company



Abstract

An Omani company with strong inclinations to contribute to and enrich the community it operates in, Salalah Methanol stands out as a fine example of corporate citizenship that strives to not only comply with the legal requirements of its heavily regulated industry, but further meet its ethical responsibilities while contributing to national economic growth.

Salalah Methanol stands out in a number of areas for their commitment to greening their operations, ensuring sound supply chain practices, safeguarding the wellbeing of its workforce, managing its footprint and contributing to the community.

Salalah Methanol has in place a commendable HSE structure that is channeled beyond its immediate operations and to its supply chain. It has also been prominent in pushing the national agenda of Omanisation and upholding human and labour rights across areas of operation.

Conclusion

Salalah Methanol strives to position itself as a corporate citizen that continuously improves its market position and economic growth by embedding pillars of sustainability in its operations. While there is great focus on philanthropic activities, Salalah Methanol has recognised very well the importance of having smart targets and quantifiable KPIS in domains of environment and social performance to succeed in their efforts towards sustainable development.

Salalah Methanol lives up to its mission by greening its operations, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of employees and the community at large, as well as responding to and prioritising the needs of its stakeholders. It has demonstrated significant capacity in contextualizing the needs of the local markets and community and has validated the strong values of taking local initiative and influencing the supply chain on sustainability related issues. The company is well on its way to make use of standards and tools to further enhance its efforts such as integrated management system and independent sustainability reporting, it needs to dedicate more effort in the area of innovation. While there are scattered internal initiatives to generate innovative ideas related to HSE, a more formalised and strategic approach can be taken to enhance performance with disruptive technology.

