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NEWSLETTER

August 2021 Volume 10 Issue 120

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Note from the President & CEO Habiba Al Mar'ashi

July was a very productive month for us in many ways. We were able to connect locally and at the global level with various stakeholders and to push our work beyond borders.

On **1st July**, I officially took up a position as a member of the World Green Building Council's Board of Directors, an honour I cherish deeply. The Board comprises of global leaders, who are driving forward the largest global-regional-local action network to deliver net zero, healthy, equitable and sustainable built environments for everyone, everywhere. The World Green Building Council (WGBC), catalysis the uptake of sustainable buildings to transform the building and construction sector across three strategic areas-climate action, health & wellbeing, and resources & circularity. It works with businesses, organisations and governments to drive the ambitions of the Paris Agreement and UN SDG Goals. I am a co-founder of the Emirates Green Building Council in the UAE and serve as its treasure since the establishment of the Council. Previously, I had served on the Membership Committee of the WorldGBC. I am happy with the opportunity my new role offers to share our experiences and insights with my esteemed colleagues around the world.

On **5th July**, ACSRN virtually attended a CSR Creativity Lab workshop hosted by Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA). The aim of the workshop was to share DEWA's strategic initiatives with stakeholders. DEWA has all of twenty seven strategies; - Global, UAE and Dubai based strategies. With a vision to make UAE the best country in the world and also make Dubai the most sustainable city, they focus squarely on various stakeholders, socially responsible practices and the goal of tackling the three main elements – Economic, Social and Environmental issues. The workshop was very interactive and participants' suggestions were given a great deal of importance.

ACSRN attended, on the **15th July**, the OECD Private Finance for Sustainable Development (PF4SD) Live Talk on Mobilising institutional investors for financing sustainable development in developing countries. The OECD has been playing an active role in supporting better policies for inclusive and sustainable development finance. While the pre-COVID-19 annual financing gap for the SDGs was estimated at USD 2.5 trillion (UNCTAD, 2020) for developing countries, it increased by 50% in 2020 and reached USD 3.7 trillion. Reducing the financing gap for the SDGs requires shifting financial

resources towards sustainable development, including from institutional investors, as well as greater alignment of all the investment chain with the SDGs. The discussion centered around the main findings of the upcoming OECD report on this topic; further mobilise institutional investors at scale; and a forum for discussion.

From **12th to the 14th July**, ACSRN successfully delivered a high level training on 'CSR Strategy and Leadership'. The pedagogical content having been developed in collaboration with the renowned Asian Institute of Management, it seeks to impart advanced knowledge on CSR/Sustainability strategies in various market scenarios, sustainability mega trends affecting business, sustainable value frameworks, leadership competencies, assessing environmental, social and governance related performance and connecting the same to business strategy and outcomes, as well as market based approaches such as reporting, rating and ranking. Held over three days, the immersive training gives participants an opportunity to delve deep into various concepts, researches, best practices and case studies.

We are delighted that our participants always come back with very encouraging feedback on the efficacy of the module, the discussions and exercises, and the insights offered by the trainers. We have other trainings coming up in the following months with attractive offers and the chance to attain impactful competence and know how on Sustainability.

To truly achieve sustainability, we must look at the entire life cycle of a product and look at ways to minimise its negative effect on the environment. The increase in usage of plastic products to package food from fruits to cooked meals has increased the amount of waste. This has been the trend particularly in the pandemic situation and resultant lockdowns, which have accelerated mobile grocery shopping and food delivery, and other online items. What about the impact on the environment, human health and fragile ecosystems? On **26th July** we joined our sister organisation EEG to organise the third Panel Discussion of the year on the theme "Sustainable Packaging & the Food Economy".

The virtual discussion convened panelists from the private sector, the government and international bodies to address the true impacts of the food industry, focusing on packaging, safety, food waste, emissions and innovative solutions. The panelists and audience unanimously agreed that sustainability and innovation are key imperatives for the food industry which has to initiate all out efforts to eliminate current unsustainable practices.





ACSRN News

Arabia CSR Network's President & CEO joins the World Green Building Council's Board of Directors

The World Green Building Council (WGBC), catalyses the uptake of sustainable buildings for everyone, everywhere, to transform the building and construction sector across three strategic areas-climate action, health & wellbeing, and resources & circularity. As members of the UN Global Compact, WGBC works with businesses, organisations and governments to drive the ambitions of the Paris Agreement and UN SDG Goals. The Network is proud to announce that Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, the President & CEO has officially joined the Board of Directors of the World Green Building Council for 2021-2023 term on **1st July**. The Board comprises an influential group of global leaders, who are driving forwards the largest global-regional-local action network to deliver net zero, healthy, equitable and sustainable built environments for everyone, everywhere.

The Network's President and CEO was appointed to the World Green Building Council (WGBC) Board of Directors for her leadership and dedication to the sustainable building movement, both in the United Arab Emirates and at a global level. She has earlier served on the Membership Committee of the WGBC. The WGBC Board of Directors comprises senior leaders that have been put forward by 14 Green Building Councils from around the world. The Board guides the strategy of the WorldGBC and ensures that it successfully delivers on its mission. Since the official appointment, ACSRN President & CEO has been attending few meetings that discuss the roles and responsibilities, the key aspects of the organisation, the essentials on WGBC strategy and state of progress and the discussion of the Board Committee and the way forward.

DEWA CSR Creativity Lab Workshop

ACSRN virtually attended a CSR Creativity Lab workshop on **5th July** which was hosted by Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA). DEWA is a public service infrastructure company that was founded in January 1991. Their workshop discussed various strategic initiatives that they follow and wish to implement. They believe that the main element is agility and they wish to foresee the future and adapt to the changes accordingly. They have 27 strategies totally, which they have further divided into Global, UAE and Dubai based strategies.

DEWA's vision is to make UAE the best country in the world. They also wish to make Dubai the most sustainable city. Their main area of focus is the various stakeholders, socially responsible practices and the goal of tackling the three main elements – Economic, Social and Environmental. DEWA prioritises the UN Sustainable Development Goals no. 6 & 7 – Clean Water and Sanitation and Affordable & Clean Energy respectively. The workshop was very interactive with two wonderful presentations. There was a Question and Answer session at the end. DEWA also gave everyone an opportunity to give suggestions, which they welcomed with open arms.

CSR Strategy and Leadership Training

Arabia CSR Network, the region's leading knowledge and training center conducted a virtual three-day certified training on Strategy and Leadership in CSR and Sustainability from the **12th - 14th July**. The CSR Strategy and Leadership training provides attendees with a deeper understanding of the leadership dimension within CSR and sustainability. The 3 day course took the attendees through various concepts, approaches and examples in order to demonstrate how effective leadership could help an organisation in attaining greater heights in terms of CSR and sustainability. It also consists of a combination of lectures, discussions and empirical examples to illustrate the core issues of strategy and leadership in CSR and sustainability.

The training is equipped with new strategies for cultivating leadership. By the end of the virtual 3-day training, the participants emerged better prepared to assess the changing social and ecological environment, develop measures for improving sustainability strategy, navigate the after effects of the economic and financial crisis and the emerging trends, and formulate new approaches for managing challenges and maximizing opportunities. To date, the Network has delivered a wide array of workshops and trainings and several in-house and virtual trainings in the UAE and the Arab Region that have offered excellent opportunities to build solid knowledge and capacity on CSR and Sustainability.





OECD PF4SD Live Talk on Mobilising Institutional Investors for Sustainable Development

ACSRN attended on **15th July** the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Private Finance for Sustainable Development (PF4SD) Live Talk on Mobilising institutional investors for financing sustainable development in developing countries. The OECD has been playing an active role in supporting better policies for inclusive and sustainable development finance. Their mission is to develop policy guidance to help maximise the impact of these investments.

Institutional investors – such as pension funds and insurance companies – are key participants in financial markets, holding more than US\$ 100 trillion of assets at end-2019. Most of these assets are invested in bonds and equities. Institutional investments are usually regulated, through quantitative limits (relatively common for pension funds) or a more principle-based approach (such as for insurance companies in many countries). While the pre-COVID-19 annual financing gap for the SDGs was estimated to amount to US\$ 2.5 trillion (UNCTAD, 2020) for developing countries, it increased by 50% in 2020 and reached US\$ 3.7 trillion. Reducing the financing gap for the SDGs requires shifting financial resources towards sustainable development, including from institutional investors, as well as greater alignment of all the investment chain with the SDGs. The Live Talk discussed on (1) the main findings of the upcoming OECD report on this topic; (2) how to further mobilise institutional investors at scale; (3) provide a forum for discussion and Q&A on the matter.

Sustainable Packaging and the Food Economy

Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) in association with its sister organisation, the Emirates Environmental Group organised the 3rd panel discussion of the year on **26th July** under the title “Sustainable Packaging and the Food Economy”. The session was moderated by ACSRN president, it hosted five distinguished speakers who gave strong insights on ways to improve sustainability in the food and packaging industry. In her introductory remarks, the ACSRN President & CEO said “ It is vital to look at the big picture and the longer scenario to ensure that our way of life is sustainable in all three dimensions; the societal, economic and environmental. Many entrepreneurs in the industry have already switched to sustainable alternatives and are looking to adapt the green solutions in their endeavours. Governments are bringing new laws and policies to directly address these issues and to work towards sustainable recovery. These are essential steps to ensure we achieve several of the Sustainable Development Goals including Goal 2 – Zero Hunger, Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth, Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, Goal 13 – Climate Action, Goal 14 – Life on Land, Goal 15 – Life Under Water and Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.”.

The distinguished Panel of speakers comprised of Engr. Yousef AlMarzooqi, head of Regulations and Systems at the new Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT), Ms. Megna Lakhani, the Founder and CEO of One Modern World, Dr. Johannes Bergmair, the General Secretary of World Packaging Organisation, Ms. Lisa Zimmermann, the Scientific Communications Office for Food Packaging Forum and Mr. Patrick Rowse, the Sustainability Manager of Delivery Hero / Talabat. The panel discussion tackled issues on how can food manufactures switch to sustainable and recyclable practices including the packaging, and how should governments demand from the food industry and the packaging manufactures to research, propose and change to alternatives and solutions that are environmentally friendly and more sustainable, what kind of innovations are required in the food packaging industry to place environmental and human health in priority over the accumulation of monetary wealth and or easy convenience.

The discussion concluded that Sustainable packaging is no longer a nice-to-have; it is now a must-have for any brand. Developing sustainable packaging is a challenge for food companies that also need to keep their products fresh and safe while making a profit. However, it's a challenge that more companies will have to meet in this evolving world wherein sustainability is an essential dynamic to Packaging. It helps reduce the carbon footprint, Earth-Friendly packaging is free of allergens and toxins, and it reduces use of resources, increase sales, and is cost-effective.

Member News

Chalhoub Group in KSA aims to have more Women in Senior Management Roles

Luxury giant Chalhoub Group aims to raise women's participation in senior management roles from 20% to 50%, the company said in its latest sustainability report. The new report, which outlined the group's key sustainability targets in Saudi Arabia, included employing more Saudis – from 91% to 93% of its frontline workforce. The group also wants to increase the number of Saudis in back of house roles from 34% to 52%, as well as integrate people with disabilities (PWDs) into its workforce. The luxury retail distributor said that it aims to accomplish these goals over the next three years, as it aligns itself with the Kingdom's country-wide objectives for its labour force. Based in Dubai, the group has been a major operator in Saudi Arabia for more than 50 years.





FEATURE ARTICLE

Build Sustainability Around Your People, Not Just Your Office

by: Bill Wagner, President and CEO of LogMeIn

When the pandemic hit, many organisations switched to full-time remote work and almost immediately there were some unexpected benefits seen around the globe. The lack of commute meant fewer cars on the road, and almost zero business travel meant fewer airplanes in the skies, resulting in cleaner air and far fewer emissions in our atmosphere. As we look toward the "next normal," we can expect to see more global corporations, investors and business leaders intensifying their sustainability efforts to reduce their carbon footprint and promote greater sustainability in a meaningful and measurable way.

Environmental implications of remote work



In the U.S. alone, emission of NO₂, one of the key indicators of global economic activities, declined 25.5 % in April 2020 compared to previous years. It was also fascinating to see that small ground vibrations generated by everyday activities dropped up to 50% in some places, marking the longest and most prominent reduction of seismic waves from human activities in recorded history. At the same time, there were some unintended negative consequences of more people working from home. Research published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information found that quarantine policies established in many countries led to more online shopping, which increased the amount of household waste from shipped package materials. Remote work alone won't solve all our sustainability problems; there is also a behavioral change that needs to occur. In this new landscape, sustainability efforts can't just be about optimising offices, but they will also need to center around empowering and educating people to drive sustainable, long-term change in the office or working from home.

Building a people-centric sustainability strategy

Initially, our sustainability initiatives were inspired by grassroots, internal efforts from employees who cared deeply about reducing our carbon footprint at the office. That then evolved into working with external consultants to do a comprehensive review and assessment of our corporate practices to better understand where we've made progress and where we still had work to do. From there, we created a formal sustainability governance committee, outlined our goals and set a strategy for the journey ahead. One core lesson that I learned from this process is that having an effective post-Covid sustainability strategy will need to focus on how companies can educate, train and empower employees in building sustainable practices — whether at home or in office. Allowing all employees to be a part of the solution will make your business — and the world as a whole — more sustainable and eco-conscious. Potential initiatives that businesses can implement to help achieve this include:

- Inviting employees to take a personal pledge to cut down on their own emissions while at home
- Further engaging employees with sustainability trainings and global green teams
- Continuing to reduce and offset all employee business travel emissions
- Implementing incentive programmes and gamifying the sustainability experience to further motivate employees and push them towards their goals
- Appointing an internal leader or employee-led committee to serve as the face of sustainability within the organisation

Remote work is part of the solution to make us a more sustainable and eco-conscious economy and world. Although change won't happen overnight, focusing on the things that your business and employees can control and impact to reduce their environmental impact will contribute to the larger effort to move the needle.





Best Practices 2019 From The Archives

Morouj Commodities LTD

Arabia CSR Awards 2nd Runner Up - Partnerships & Collaborations Category

Profile

One of the fastest growing brands in the foodstuff packaging and import sector in Sudan, Morouj Commodities Ltd is a well-known and respected name since its creation in 2005. The company has been steadily expanding its base while holding true to its founders' aspirations and goals. This has been possible through a business strategy of introducing products of exceptional quality to its customers so that within a short span of time, Morouj has been able to enforce its presence among other companies operating in the same sector in Sudan.

The good reputation that the company enjoys along with the continuous development of its employees are the pillars behind the success of the Morouj brand. The company has a fully dedicated workforce of 400 employees that have helped make Morouj become a widely recognised name in the food market, specifically through its three main brands: Al Farasha, Al-Wadi and Tatto Mitto.



Summary

The Morouj Green project turned a waste dump into an Oasis and brought life to the community and taught the younger generations the real value of collaboration and sustainability. This was a need of the hour in light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Sudan. Within the last 25 years, Sudan had lost 25% of its forests. Darfur had lost one-third and East of Sudan had lost two-thirds of its forests. Due to the fall in the percentage of rainfall, the desert area has increased from 50 to 200 km². Moreover, this led to extreme weather patterns causing 20% damage in agricultural production.

The project began in August 2016 with the aim of planting 10,000 Neem trees on 1,500 acres of a desert area called Hattab in Khartoum North Bahri. A research was carried out to identify the need analysis at different levels. At first, Hattab was a land of garbage dump and sewage water. Morouj wanted to step in to change this fact and avail this opportunity to irrigate the trees by using the treated sewage water. On 11th of March 2017, phase 1 of Hattab project started. Employees of Morouj, natives of Hattab area, students from different schools and Safia Women Organisation planted 9,000 Neem trees. The trees were irrigated using the treated sewage water, which would have been an un-utilised resource and would have incurred treatment cost for the state. The project managed to achieve its goals of producing 740,000 KG of oxygen per year, to mobilise the local community to plant 10,000 trees in 1,500 acres of land, to engage the Khartoum State Sanitary Corporation water treatment plant to supply and install an irrigation system and to rationalise the use of 3,650,000 liters of water (10,000 liters / day) of sewage water resources. This project also succeeded in creating employment opportunities and paved the way for economic growth.

Lesson Learnt

- Morouj succeeded in using sewage water on their land in spite of the initial resistance from the community and in working with the government by making the community and stakeholders see the bigger picture through conducting awareness sessions explaining the benefits and involving community stakeholders to do the required lobbying.
- Morouj was able to identify that social and political instability was the number one challenge which affected mobility and in return caused delays. Although this is a contextual risk beyond the project's control but the identification helped them in closely monitoring the situation. They have done this by implementing Project risks and challenges and regularly updating the Steering Committee in meetings and assigning action items to the team.
- Other challenges included low capacity of community volunteers which was addressed through orientation sessions. - Connectivity challenges affected communication and exchange of information that were addressed through resorting to field visits and face-to-face meetings.

