



Upcoming Trainings



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Note from the President & CEO Habiba Al Mar'ashi

Hello Arabia CSR Network members,

Ramadan Mubarak to all our readers, followers and well-wishers!

The month of April this year is coinciding with the holy month of Ramadan, in which Muslims observe fasting (abstaining from eating and drinking) from dusk to dawn. Ramadan is the holiest month for the followers of Islam. In the month of Ramadhan, the first verses of the Quran were revealed to Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him). I pray today that: Happiness be at our doors. May it knock early and stay late & leave the gift of Allah's peace, love, joy & good health behind.

In recent years, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has grown to become an increasingly important metric within the business realm and Sustainability remains a core foundation of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues and a central aspect of many CSR policies. However, CSR is not just a business model, it's a practice that ensures businesses imbed social responsibility in their core operations and strategies.

With regards to the post-pandemic recovery, CSR will likely come into even greater prominence as consumers and stakeholders seek to support businesses that align with their morals. With this, the Network started with increased focus on the upcoming Arabia CSR Awards that brings to the fore best practices in the field of CSR and Sustainability in the Arab World. The Awards Clinic is the next step in the process which is scheduled to be held on the 7th of April.

The Arabia CSR Awards Clinic is a session uniquely designed to guide previous, current and potential awards applicants on how best to submit a strong and Award Winning Application. The Clinic will provide a complete outline of the awards criteria, methodology and requirements as well as highlight the key points that the jury will be seeking out in evaluating the applications. Therefore, if you are already an applicant for the Arabia CSR Awards, or are considering to apply, we strongly recommend you to attend the Clinic.

We promise you that it will be an educational experience for you and your organisation. Early this month, I am pleased to share that the Network participated as a Sustainability Partner

with our sister organisation's prized event of the year - EEG's Annual Corporate Gala Dinner – which was held on 2nd March. The theme of the gala dinner was "United Humanity, A Sustainable Planet". The gala event was held under the Patronage of H. E. Engineer Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Civil Aviation Department and a Member of the Government of Ras Al Khaimah Executive Council. Read more on page 3.

In mid-March, ACSRN also supported EEG and its partner Global Urban Development as the Sustainable Partner in organising a historic international conference for sustainable urban development under the theme "The Future of Housing Innovations for Developing Affordable and Sustainable Communities". This conference was organised in association with the Embassy of Switzerland to the UAE and Bahrain, supported by Emirates Green Building Council and Council Clean Energy Business.

The discussion at this conference focused on the emerging trends in the first of its kind green conference at EXPO Dubai. It presented and discussed current characteristics of the building sector and its impact on energy, environmental quality, economic and social status, to depict the existing phenomena, problems, and opportunities, analyse future trends, synergies & challenges and critically investigate the potential pathways towards a partial or full de-carbonisation of the building sector. You can read more on page 4.

During the month, I also attended a meeting held by the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance. The meeting featured very important session focussing on GISD's outreach and engagement activities, with critical interventions by the GISD Alliance Co-Chair and the Lead of the new GISD Engagement Group.

The coming month promises to be eventful as well with the further roll out of the Arabia CSR Awards Clinic. We have several trainings and workshops coming up in the next couple of months that we have prepared for our members and interested parties. The most immediate one is the Sustainability Reporting Training to be held from the 16th – 18th May and a one day Gap Analysis workshop on 19th May. Do join us in trainings and apply for the Arabia CSR Awards to learn, share, exchange and spread the word about the role of corporate social responsibility and sustainability in promoting UN's Sustainable Development Goals.





ACSRN News

EEG's 25th Annual Gala Dinner

Under the Patronage of H. E. Engineer Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Civil Aviation Department and a Member of the Government of Ras Al Khaimah Executive Council, and an honorary member of Emirates Environmental Group (EEG), the 25th cycle of EEG's annual Gala Dinner was organised on **2nd March** at Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort in the presence of VIPs, dignitaries, government, corporates and representatives of the media. The ACSRN proudly participated and supported the event as the "Sustainability Partner" along with other EEG partners and sponsors, namely, McDonald's UAE - Platinum Sponsor, Wasl Properties - Special Sponsor, Chalhoub Group and Adeeb Group - Silver Sponsors, Farnek - Carbon Neutral Partner.

Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi as the Co-founder and Chairperson of EEG expressed her gratitude to all EEG supporters and well-wishers. She said: "Partnerships and collaborations between stakeholders from all sectors of the society are vital to ensure the progress towards a sustainable future. In the past few years, across the world, people from youth to governments are realising, discussing and highlighting the looming and ongoing threats of climate change. To effectively control and reduce these unprecedented impacts, we all need to work together, all entities across all sectors of the society, from the local level all the way to international liaisons."

She shared that "EEG started as a promising organisation armed with a vision to contribute to the green development of the UAE, today it stands tall at the national and regional level as one of the strongest "green platforms" that participate effectively at the community level to preserve the environment." As its Sustainability Partner, ACSRN, is proud with the achievements and milestones that EEG has accomplished for more than three decades now. Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) really sets the bar high as the first environmental non-government organisation in the world to be accredited with ISO 14001 and the only organisation in the UAE to have accredited status to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). EEG is also the member of the UN Global Compact.



GISD Strategy Group

In 2019, Business leaders joined the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, to step up delivery of critical investment, for a 'sustainable, net zero, resilient and equitable world'. The Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance, which brings together 30 business giants that includes EEG's Co-Founder & Chairperson, met the UN Secretary-General in New York, and outlined concrete actions for the future. Since October 2019, when the Secretary-General convened the GISD Alliance, its CEOs and other top executives have been working with the UN and other partners to develop guidelines and products that align the existing finance and investment ecosystem, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Acknowledging the "great responsibility" facing private sector leaders, The GISD Alliance was clear to build a sustainable, net zero, resilient, and equitable world, to better align investment with sustainable development and to act on their commitments, with credible timelines, targets and plans. Since its creation, the GISD Alliance has developed standards and tools aimed at moving trillions of dollars to bridge the gap in financing, to realize the UN's 2030 Agenda. More recently, a virtual meeting for the Strategy group took place on **8th – 9th March** with EEG Co-Founder & Chairperson attended. The meeting featured a very important session focussing on GISD's outreach and engagement activities, with critical interventions by the GISD Alliance Co-Chair and the Lead of the new GISD Engagement Group.





The Sustainable Urban Development Conference

Arabia CSR Network joined its sister organisation, the Emirates Environmental Group, as a sustainability partner for its first mega-international conference titled – The Sustainable Urban Development Conference. The conference was organised in partnership with Global Urban Development (GUD) and in association with the Embassy of Switzerland to the UAE and Bahrain, supported by Emirates Green Building Council and Council Clean Energy Business. The silver sponsors of the conference were HOK UAE and Knauf UAE. The event was Carbon Neutral courtesy of Farnek. The conference received the patronage of EXPO 2020 Dubai under the leadership of H.E. Reem Ebrahim Al Hashimy, Managing Director for the Expo 2020 Dubai Bureau and Member of the Higher Committee of Dubai Expo 2020 the conference.

Presented under the theme - **"The Future of Housing Innovations for Developing Affordable and Sustainable Communities"**; it brought together a congregation of renowned influencers, policy and practice leaders, and industry champions from Europe, Middle East, Africa, North America and beyond. They shared unique experiences and insights in the conference, focusing on economic, environmental and social challenges, solutions and opportunities.

The 5 comprehensive sessions that the conference covered were the pillars that were enlightened by expert speaker panelists namely:

1. Integrating Technologies: Constructing Sustainable Housing
2. Re-examining Policies: Inclusive Role of Leadership
3. Accelerating Progress: Learning from Best Practices
4. Empowering People: The Role of Financing
5. Altering Urban Designs: Paths to Sustainable Communities



Member News

Chalhoub's Commitment to Gender Equality (UN SDG 5)

Following International Women's Day, Chalhoub Group launched its 'Women in Leadership' programme during 'Immersion' week on **March 16 & 17**, including select female participants, their line managers, coaches, senior leadership and prominent figures and speakers. This launch is another key milestone towards the company's ambitious and bold commitment to have 50% of senior leadership roles filled by women by 2024.

The programme will be divided into three modules:

- The Women in Me – focused on discovering strengths and building confidence
- Women in the Team – a reflection on self and team leadership
- The Women in Business – exploring how to become an effective leader

The 'Women in Leadership' programme is just one part of a wider movement for 2022 to put a spotlight on how Chalhoub Group hires, manages performance, develops succession plans and guides women with the aim for gender parity. The programme targets mid-to-senior level female managers selected through the annual 'Talent Identification' process to build stronger female talent pipelines across the region.





EGA to Expand Clean Energy Generation

Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA), Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA), Dubal Holding and Emirates Water and Electricity Company (EWEC) recently announced a plan to unlock significant further development of solar power generation capacity in Abu Dhabi. The plan includes enhancing of generation optimisation, and decarbonisation of EGA's aluminium production in the UAE. The initiative, now subject to further negotiation and regulatory approvals in both Abu Dhabi and Dubai, would advance TAQA and Dubal Holding's growth strategies, see EGA become a leader in the global aluminium industry's drive towards net zero by 2050, and support EWEC's continued development of strategic renewable energy initiatives to reduce the carbon intensity of the energy sector. "Sourcing cost-effective clean power from the grid will enable EGA to lead our global industry into a more sustainable future. Today, we are taking another historic step towards achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050," said Abdul Nasser Bin Kalban, Chief Executive Officer of EGA.

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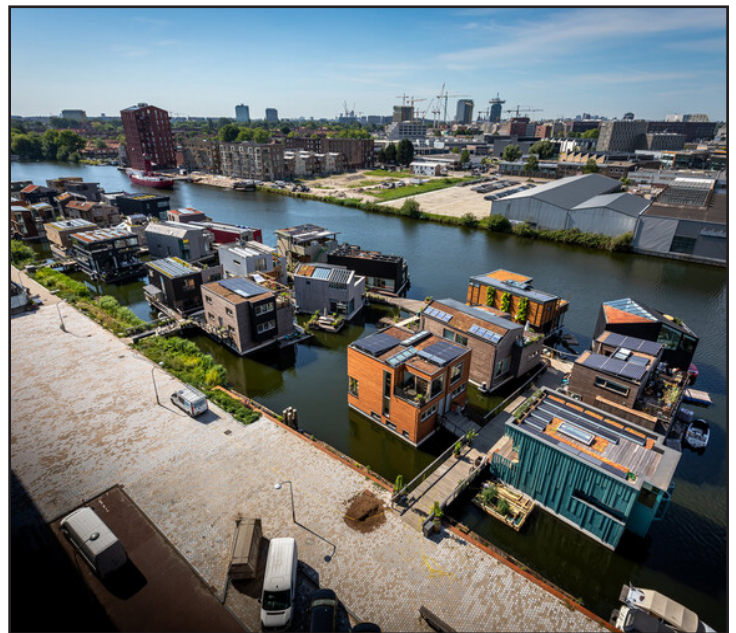
FEATURE ARTICLE

Circular Economy in Urban Design: Sustainability and Community Involvement

Excerpts from Andreea Cutieru

While circular economy is often discussed in relation to the architectural object through the lens of material recycling, design for disassembly and material passports, the framework is most fully enacted at the neighbourhood and city scale. Whether it is visions of circular communities that hint at some level of self-sufficiency or policies set in motion by cities, urban-scale projects exemplify the guiding principles of the circular economy, providing a glimpse into what a fully-fledged version of it might look like.

The circular economy is usually reduced to the 3Rs -Reduce-Reuse-Recycle, the concept is much more complex, presenting multiple ramifications that involve paradigm shifts in how urban environments are designed. Cities are resource consumption centres and significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions. The prevailing economic model is linear and translates into raw materials being mined to manufacture components that are subsequently used and ultimately end as waste at the end of their lifecycle. The demand for raw materials is predicted to double by 2050. Urban communities are central to developing circular economy models. It is essential to analyze the urban structure as a whole. Cities are already spearheading efforts to combat climate change and setting the groundwork for a circular economy, further enabling various climate mitigation opportunities. Developing circular economy strategies requires creating a holistic understanding of how a city manages its resources what are its waste patterns and engaging private stakeholders in becoming partners in a new local economic framework.



In 2020, the EU published a Circular Economy Action Plan, one of the critical components for implementing the Green New Deal. The strategy involves designing sustainable products, reducing waste and creating an EU market for secondary materials, among other steps. The plan outlines the possible introduction of recycled content requirements for certain construction products, a significant paradigm shift for building codes for the construction sector. Additionally EU seeks to promote initiatives to reduce soil sealing and rehabilitate abandoned or contaminated brownfields. Moving towards a fully circular economy is a multi-step, complex process that is mostly policy-driven.





Best Practices 2020 From The Archives

Aster DM Healthcare

Arabia CSR Awards Winner - Hospitality Sector Category

Profile

Aster DM Healthcare is one of the largest private healthcare providers in the Arab and South Asia region. It operates in seven countries (U.A.E, KSA, Qatar, Jordan, Oman, Bahrain and India).

In its network, Aster DM Healthcare has 15 hospitals, 117 clinics, and 238 pharmacies. These are run under three brands that cater to different economic segments of society – Medcare for premium healthcare, Aster for all and Access for affordable healthcare services.

With a capacity of more than 5,000 beds in all its Aster and Medcare hospitals, Aster DM Healthcare has made a very significant and positive mark on the healthcare sector of the region.



Summary

From a single clinic in 1987 in Dubai, Aster DM Healthcare has grown to become one of the fastest growing private healthcare providers today in 6 Arab countries and in India. With more than 360 establishments consisting of hospitals, clinics, diagnostic centres, pharmacies and retail across 7 countries, Aster is recognised as a high-quality and accessible healthcare service provider. Part of its recognition, is its welfare-oriented focus for its patients and the larger community. Over the years, Aster has invested heavily in various health-based initiatives for social development. It works with a number of charities and CSR & sustainability focused entities. It has a large and strong group of volunteers and it has a wide range of its own programmes that aim to create meaningful impact in the society. Aster has demonstrated a keen understanding of many sustainability focused aspects such as water & energy management and climate change mitigation. This approach has helped Aster take an innovative direction towards many issues that can be a big risk for the healthcare sector. This case study focuses on how Aster has been able to build such a strong 'sustainability-oriented' brand over the years.

Lessons Learnt

This case study shows how a community-focused approach helps a business expand its operations and build upon its core strengths. Aster's mission to provide high-quality, affordable and accessible healthcare services has given it the drive to reach out to various segments of society. Of its various Board of Director's Committees, Aster has established a dedicated Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility. This indicates the priority of the Company's leadership towards Aster's corporate responsibility and allows it to gain management and board level approval to implement large-scale CSR projects and initiatives.

Aster Volunteers is the Company's crown jewel as it helps impact underprivileged communities across the world. This includes regions where Aster has no commercial presence, thus showcasing Aster's genuine interest to contribute to social development. Working in various areas such as healthcare, disaster relief, education, supporting people with special needs, environmental protection, supporting under-privileged families and children, Aster Volunteers has been at the forefront of community development in many communities. Aster realises that the successful implementation of its CSR and sustainable development agenda relies on a number of partnerships and collaborations at the global, regional, national and local levels. It regularly partners with a number of community, government and private sector entities to drive its CSR charter.

The focus on social initiatives have not compromised Aster's emphasis on managing its environmental footprint. Aster has invested heavily in energy & water efficiency and waste management to help reduce its operational costs and also reduce its emissions to mitigate the impact of climate change.

