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الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
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Arabia CSR Network®

**Certified Training
on Fundamentals
of CSR & Sustainability**

Date: 17th – 18th April 2024

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**Sustainability
Reporting
Training**

Date: 15th – 16th May 2024

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**GAP Analysis
Workshop**

20th May 2024

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Note from the President & CEO Habiba Al Mar'ashi

Hello members, readers, followers and well-wishers!

Here is wishing everyone a spiritual conclusion to the holy month of Ramadhan and May you all have a blessed Eid Al Fitr holidays.

I had a wonderful beginning to the month, as I was the chief guest on 1st March at LED lighting conference hosted by HansaGreen, a pioneering UAE manufacturer; I had the privilege of highlighting our significant sustainability endeavours. In my address, I emphasized the critical role of LED technology in energy conservation and addressing the global climate crisis. I further articulated how such innovations align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and our National energy strategy, underscoring their vital contribution to our shared sustainability objectives particularly under the Energy Sector.

We joined the Annual Corporate Gala Dinner of Emirates Environmental Group held on **5th March**, under the patronage and present of H.H. Eng. Sheikh Salem bin Sultan Al Qasimi, ACSRN was delighted to join as the Sustainability Partner. This esteemed event, themed “**Guiding Sustainability Tributaries, Foundation of a Unified Path,**” recognised 68 entities from the government and private sector entities for their significant contributions to the sustainable development of the UAE. With 200 distinguished attendees, including ambassadors, consul generals, undersecretaries from several ministries, as well as a galaxy of CEO and other top management attendees from the private sector, the gala highlighted the various achievements, including extensive engagement with Academia and the corporate sector in sustainability initiatives, marked by a keynote from H.E. Marwan Al Za’abi Assistant Under-Secretary Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment.

At the prestigious Emirates Investments Magazine Awards held at Atlantis the Palm on the **6th of March**, it was an honour for me to receive the '**Best Arab Women in Improving Environmental Practices in the MENA Region for 2023**'. This acknowledgment underlines the continuous efforts and commitment to environmental action and sustainable development, a journey we share with our supportive community and esteemed patrons like HH Eng. Sheikh Salem bin Sultan bin Saqr Al-Qasimi.

I was delighted to welcome H.E. Sybille Pfaff the German Consul General and Ms. Miriam Muller, the Vice Consul from the German Consulate to our office. This visit underscored the strong partnership and shared commitment to sustainable development. Our discussions ranged from enhancing bilateral relations to our impactful projects and campaigns, highlighting our pivotal role in societal progress. I also had the pleasure of being interviewed by a finalist from The Haut Monde Mrs. India Worldwide contest, an event that champions the empowerment and talents of married

women globally. Our conversation delved into sustainability initiatives, reflecting our shared goal of fostering meaningful change and awareness in society.

On World Water Day and in my capacity as the Co-Founder, Vice Chair and Treasurer of the Emirates Green Building Council, I had the honor of moderating the "Flow of Knowledge" webinar, a joint initiative by the EmiratesGBC and MoroccoGBC, aimed at addressing water sustainability challenges in the MENA region. The event attracted over 60 entities and was a significant platform for exchanging best practices and insights on advancing water sustainability in the region.

In a distinguished gathering under the patronage of H.H Sheikh Salem Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, we hosted a thought-provoking panel discussion on "Extending the Year of Sustainability... What does it mean to us?" at His Highness’s Majlis on **30th March**. The session was conducted in Arabic and managed to bring diverse stakeholders to deliberate on sustaining the momentum of the UAE's sustainability efforts into 2024 and beyond. Amidst the reflective period of Ramadan, we shared insights on our collective role in combating climate change and leading sustainable actions, emphasizing the importance of continued dedication to a sustainable future for the UAE.

I'm thrilled to share that the office has been bustling with activity during this holy month, focusing on delivering top-notch advisory services while gearing up for a series of upcoming training programmes. One particular highlight on our agenda is the Arabia CSR Awards Clinic, an exclusive half-day workshop is designed to guide you through the application process and criteria and meticulously crafted to offer a thorough comprehension of the awards process. It serves as a platform to address any queries our members may have, with the invaluable assistance of our dedicated technical team members. We're committed to providing unparalleled support and guidance as we collectively strive for excellence in corporate social responsibility. Mark your calendars for **16th April** at Swisotel Al Murooj.

Finally, I am extending an invitation to our wide network to join the 2024 Arabia CSR Awards, a prestigious platform celebrating CSR and sustainability pioneers across the Arab region. This programme showcases leadership in social and environmental responsibility and offers an invaluable opportunity for organisations in the Arab World to share their impactful stories..

For further information or support, please contact us via awards@arabiacsrnnetwork.com, admin@arabiacsrnnetwork.com, or +97143448622.

Let's unite to foster a sustainable future for our region!

Sincerely,
Habiba Al Marashi,



ACSRN News

A chief guest at a Lighting Conference

ACSRN President was invited as a chief guest to give a 15-minute speech at an LED lighting conference organised by HansaGreen; a leading manufacturing company in the UAE.

In her speech, she narrated the efforts undertaken by Emirates Environmental Group and ACSRN in the sustainability field and ended her speech by articulating the value added by LED lighting company in the effort to conserve energy and tackle global climate crisis. She shared with the attendees how LED companies like HansaGreen effectively contribute to the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

EEG's Annual Corporate Gala Dinner

Emirates Environmental Group hosted its annual corporate Gala Dinner on 5th March under the esteemed presence and patronage of H.H. Eng. Sheikh Salem bin Sultan bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Chairman of the Department of Civil Aviation Ras Al Khaimah and Member of the Government of Ras Al Khaimah's Executive Council at Sheraton JRB.

Arabia CSR Network was delighted to join as the sustainability partner of this Carbon Neutral event which was held under the theme "Guiding Sustainability Tributaries, Foundation of a Unified Path," a gather of more than 200 personalities witnessed the recognition of stage of 68 private and public entities for their accomplishment and support to the sustainability initiatives on the national level. The key note was given by His Excellency Marwan Al Zaabi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Regions Sector at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment.



ACSRN President & CEO receives Best Arab Women Award

Held at Atlantis the Palm on 6th March, ACSRN President & CEO attended the 7th session of the Emirates Investments Magazine Awards for the Best Inspiring Business Leaders in the Middle East and North Africa for 2023. As one of the pioneers who has inspired sustainability action in the country and who has put tremendous efforts towards sustainable development, she was awarded 'Best Arab Women in Improving Environmental practices in the MENA region for the year 2023'.

The event was held under the patronage and presence of HH Eng Sheikh Salem bin Sultan bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Department of Civil Aviation and Member of Ras Al Khaimah Executive Council.



Visit from Consul General of Germany

ACSRN is in a unique position to work with all sectors of the society to encourage partnerships and work towards sustainable development of the country. In addition, ACSRN also influences the vast majority of the sector in the region as a CSR training and elevating nexus. Both EEG and ACSRN have a very close relation with the Germany Consulate in Dubai, a neighbour right next to the ACSRN office in Jumeirah. As a testament to this relation, H. E. Sybille Pfaff, the Consul General of German Consulate in the UAE along with Ms. Miriam Muller, the Vice Consul visited EEG office on 13th March.

Mrs. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, the President of ACSRN met with them and discussed both entities role in ushering sustainable progress in the country, the engagement platforms with all sectors, how to strengthen relations, among many other topics.



ACSRN News

EEG Chairperson interviewed by Mrs. India Finalist

As one of the most influential and action-oriented sustainability personality in the region, ACSRN President was interviewed by one of the finalists of The Haut Monde Mrs. India Worldwide contest. The contest celebrates married women from across the globe and places a strong emphasis on empowering women, showcasing their talents, intelligence, and contributions to society beyond physical beauty.

Winners and participants of the Haut Monde Mrs. India Worldwide contest often become ambassadors for various social and environmental causes, using the platform to spread awareness and contribute to meaningful change. In this regard, she was interviewed to gather information and her expertise related to the environment field and sustainability initiatives in the country and region.

ACSRN President & CEO moderates critical discussion

On the occasion of World Water Day, ACSRN president moderated on 21st March a webinar discussion titled "Flow of Knowledge: EmiratesGBC and MoroccoGBC Converging for Water Sustainability in the MENA Region". Conducted by the Emirates Green Building Council and the Moroccan Green Building Council, this discussion attracted over 60 participants. It aimed to bring to the fore the status of water in the built environment, bringing local, regional and global perspective into the discussion. The discussion further highlighted challenges faced in the region with regards to water security, economic feasibility, sustainable water infrastructure, management and other aspects in relation to the topic. ACSRN President & CEO was delighted to moderate and ask the critical questions and draw out the right best practices from the experts.



Arabia CSRN president is a Panellist in a special Ramadan Panel Discussion conducted by EEG

Under the esteemed patronage and partnership between H.H Sheikh Salem Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Civil Aviation Department and Member of the Government of Ras Al Khaimah Executive Council and the Emirates Environmental Group, a unique Panel discussion was held on 30th March at 9:30 pm. Held at His Highness's Majlis, the event brought together various stakeholders from public, private and academic sector to discuss "Extending the Year of Sustainability: What does it Mean for the UAE?." This discussion was held entirely in Arabic and was a full house occasion that combined the spirit of Ramadan with the pivotal importance of sharing knowledge for the betterment of environment and humanity. As the UAE continues its efforts to tackle climate change and be a leader in sustainable actions, this discussion was important to ask the necessary questions and for the public to take the necessary steps to ensure that the year 2024 will also be a Year of Sustainability for UAE as was the year 2023. ACSRN president was delighted to be part of this discussion and bring a CSR body and civil society perspective to this critical discussion.



Upcoming Event

ACSRN joins EEG as CSR Partner

ACSRN extends its invitation to its members and stakeholders in the UAE to attend the joint panel discussion organised with its sister organisation; the Emirates Environmental Group. The panel is convening under the theme "Economic & Social Instability: Hindering Sustainable Progress?". The main objective of the discussion is to understand the Impact of Global Turmoil, considering the repercussions of war and geopolitical instability on sustainable development; at the same time explore challenges, future-proofing economic processes, navigating political landmines and addressing the importance of poverty eradication. The discussion also aims to will grapple with the dual-edged sword of population growth. Acknowledging that a larger population demands more resources, the panel will deliberate on the need for careful management to avert exacerbating poverty, migration global distribution of resources and similar linked topics.

This is the 3rd panel discussion of the year 2024 and will be held on **30th April** at the Five Palm Hotel. If you believe you or a person in your organisation is an expert in this matter and would like to come on board as a panellist, please contact EEG at eeg@eim.ae. To register please click the link below.

[CLICK FOR MORE](#)



Feature Article

It's Time for Sustainability to Become a Core Part of MBA Programs

written by Magali Delmas and Brad Sparks on February 07, 2024

With the advent of stringent climate disclosure regulations, corporations are in urgent need of a workforce equipped with the necessary skills to navigate new demands. Yet few professionals possess the interdisciplinary skills essential for this task. Business schools have a prime opportunity to prepare the next generation for leadership in the carbon transition. However, this task surpasses their current scope. It calls for an interdisciplinary approach, broadening beyond traditional business education.

Why Business Schools Must Step Up

A global shift is underway towards transparency in climate-related activities. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is on the brink of finalizing a new rule that will enforce mandatory climate disclosures for publicly reporting companies. Concurrently, California enacted in October climate change disclosure bills, SB261, and SB253. The Californian laws align with the European Union's disclosure initiatives and other emerging international disclosure requirements. Others, such as those proposed by the UK Transition Plan Taskforce, loom.

California stipulates that firms report their direct emissions for 2025 by 2026; their Scope 3 emissions by 2027. Potential penalties for noncompliance could hit \$500,000 per year. Firms must prepare a report disclosing climate-related financial risk and plans to alleviate them. A study estimated that 73% of Fortune 1000 companies fall under SB253 and SB 261.

However, our research shows corporate sustainability disclosure quality is subpar, with spotty low disclosure of required data and confusion on what is disclosed. Big corporations often report their direct emissions from sources like factories and occasionally pollution from their electricity consumption. However, they seldom reveal their indirect emissions, which account for three-quarters of total emissions. Among the Fortune 300, just 61.2% share Scope 3 emissions, and that data is reported inconsistently. Data gathering and reporting capabilities within companies must improve.

What's more, assurance-related requirements will compel auditors to examine reported emissions, precipitating a surge in demand for specialized knowledge at companies and auditors. Estimates of compliance costs from SEC regulation were about \$530,000, and many S&P 500 companies expect to hire additional experts in their teams. For example, Amazon already staffed professionals within the finance function to respond to emerging ESG reporting requirements, according to interviews we performed with the company.

Why Business Schools Must Step Up

To address these challenges, business schools should revamp their curriculum to ensure it covers the specific skills that are essential for these new sustainability professionals. This involves partnerships with environmental and engineering departments to offer a more rounded education. These programs should blend expertise in environmental and climate science with essential business skills like carbon accounting, strategy, and governance. They should also actively recruit faculty who specialize in sustainability and develop programs specifically designed to fill the skills gaps identified by industry experts.

Climate mitigation and adaptation touches all the core MBA classes, and so all faculty should be encouraged to examine sustainability in their introductory courses. Strategy courses must help students define net-zero strategies and set time-bound targets relevant to the value chain. Finance courses must teach students about green bonds, carbon pricing, sustainability-linked loans, and other instruments crucial to transition, and so on. Instructors should offer experiential learning where students engage in direct data collection and analysis. In our Business & Environment class at Anderson, we have developed such an approach where students gather corporate sustainability disclosure data from actual S&P 500 companies and then provide insightful recommendations to these businesses.

This hands-on approach in real-world scenarios deepens understanding and provides practical skills. Moreover, the curriculum needs to break down the silos between disciplines. For instance, there's a critical need for a common language between sustainability experts and accountants, who currently operate on different wavelengths. Sustainability practitioners understand how to measure carbon footprints but may be unfamiliar with internal control frameworks. Accountants aren't trained in carbon footprint methodologies and must depend on sustainability experts.

These disconnects extend to finance departments, where CFOs bear responsibility for disclosed carbon data but may not grasp nuances of its collection or differences between models. Such integration is crucial for professionals, including CFOs and their staff, who are increasingly responsible for disclosed carbon data but often lack deep understanding of its nuances. CFOs recognize this disconnect. A forthcoming CFO survey by Accounting for Sustainability (A4S) found only 10% of finance teams considered fully capable in environmental and social considerations.



Feature Article

Filling the Gap

As business schools have been tardy in meeting the demand of employers for trained sustainability professionals, accounting firms and trade associations are stepping up to fill the gap. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and CFA Institute, the global association of investment professionals, launched a Climate Finance course designed by their experts. Deloitte introduced a global sustainability and climate learning program for its 415,000 employees. Clients demand “greater information and guidance on sustainability issues, approaches to addressing the climate crisis, and good corporate governance,” according to Deloitte. While notable, these efforts fall short of fully integrating scientific, managerial, and economic considerations. Frankly, they are a poor substitute for a well-administered, climate-focused MBA. Business schools face a decline in applicants. Students, meanwhile, are keenly interested in corporate sustainability. This is opportunity. Some business schools are seizing it. ClimateCAP Summit lets MBA students explore climate change’s business implications. UC Berkeley’s Haas School of Business and the Rausser College of Natural Resources MBA/Master of Climate Solutions program are also taking initial steps.

But overall, business schools are playing catch-up in producing graduates who are adept at crossing disciplinary boundaries. They need to further integrate interdisciplinary courses into their curricula, blending environmental science, carbon accounting, and strategic governance. Business schools that fail to adapt risk being left behind, while those that embrace this integration will be at the forefront of training the next generation of leaders in corporate sustainability. [CLICK FOR MORE](#)

Best Practices 2022 From The Archives ACER Winner - Small Business Category

A Brief about the Organisation

Acer was established in 1992 in the MENA region, it is a part of global entity that has been in operation since 1976. ACER is a hardware, software and services company committed to the development, design, marketing, sale and support of innovative products that enhance people’s lives. ACER started with a small staff and currently serves 15 countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

ACER has consistently promoted technological excellence throughout the years while placing its consumers at the centre of all decisions. Gaming and consumer PCs, chrome solutions, and expanding commercial business are the main drivers of ACER’s operations in the region. The business is making steady changes to its current operations while also making investments in the future. The company keeps pushing for innovation in its current businesses while expanding into new markets in order to keep up with the industry and changing lifestyles. It promotes intrapreneurship to encourage employees to think creatively.

ACER has been training employees about how they can all do their part to develop a greener environment and raise awareness of climate change. It has launched ‘Project Humanity’ in 2019 with a three-year plan. This initiative started at the individual level and now has Project Humanity Ambassadors from their worldwide network of employees, whom they invite to make the world a better place and seek to inspire employees and also contribute collectively to the goals of reducing- reusing-recycling.

Additionally, under the Earthion platform, which is a spinoff of Project Humanity, ACER Middle East initiated a regional campaign to plant native trees on the occasion of launching its first environmentally friendly laptop, the Aspire Vero, which has motivated both internal and external stakeholders. As they continue to combine the data, ACER estimates that they have prevented the release of 80 MT of CO2 emissions to date. Innovating in all facets of technology, management and operations is something that the company is devoted to doing.

Lessons learnt

- ACER’s ESG policies on deepening corporate responsibility governance and engaging with stakeholders are essential to the success of its operations.
- Additionally, balancing interests, overcoming obstacles, collaborating with stakeholders to create shared value and developing win-win industrial ecologies, are all integrated into the company’s core values, bringing the company rich dividends.
- Launching multiple environmental projects with the support of its customers, employees and community helps ACER works to augment climate action and corporate responsibility.
- Although an ICT company, ACER understands that its responsibility is to shape a better future by giving back to the global community in ways that go beyond providing the latest technologies.
- Internally, innovating in all facets of technology, management and operations is the guiding principle.