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Upcoming Trainings & Workshops

 الشبكة العربية للمسؤولية
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**Sustainability
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Online**



March 4th – 5th 2026

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**Stakeholder
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Workshop**



March 11th 2026

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April 15th – 16th 2026

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Note from the Founder & CEO

Dear Members, Partners and Friends,
Ramadan Mubarak to all! As we enter this blessed month of reflection, generosity and spirituality, it is an opportune time to consider how our actions — big and small — can create lasting positive impact. Just as Ramadan inspires giving, compassion and shared responsibility, sustainability and corporate responsibility call on us to act with care for our environment, communities and future generations. In this spirit of purpose and positive action, I am delighted to share that our office has been exceptionally vibrant and energised in recent weeks. The phones have been ringing, inboxes have been filling, and conversations have been thriving as organisations across the region express keen interest in participating in the 19th Cycle of the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards. The momentum has been truly inspiring. Year after year, these Awards continue to attract leading organisations committed to measurable impact and responsible growth and this cycle is already shaping up to be one of our most dynamic yet.

Recognised as the Middle East's premier platform celebrating excellence in corporate social responsibility, sustainability and ESG leadership since 2008, the Awards honour organisations that lead by example — creating tangible social, environmental and economic value across the region. For nearly two decades, they have provided a powerful benchmark for responsible business, showcasing best practices, inspiring innovation, and elevating organisations that demonstrate genuine commitment to sustainable development. Alongside this exciting momentum, we are also in full swing preparing for the 14th Cycle of the Global Sustainability & CSR Forum, scheduled to take place in Dubai on 12th & 13th October 2026 at the prestigious Dubai World Trade Centre. This flagship gathering has evolved into one of the region's most influential sustainability platforms, bringing together business leaders, policymakers, investors, academics and innovators to explore emerging trends, share practical solutions and drive meaningful collaboration.

With each passing year, the Forum grows in scale and impact, and this upcoming edition promises to deliver powerful insights, strategic dialogue and actionable outcomes that will help shape the next chapter of sustainable development in our region and beyond. Across the globe, businesses and institutions are accelerating their sustainability journeys — advancing climate action, embedding circular economy principles, prioritising social equity, and strengthening governance frameworks. Here in the Middle East, we are witnessing a profound shift as organisations integrate sustainability into their core strategies and operations, reflecting a growing recognition that long-term resilience and competitiveness are inseparable from responsible practice. At the Arabia CSR Network, we are proud to support and accelerate this transformation by providing platforms for dialogue, recognition and collaboration that connect industry, government, academia and civil society.

Since the beginning of 2026, we are already witnessing a dynamic energy in our sector. On 10th February, I had the honour of delivering a keynote address at AIBC Eurasia 2026, where I engaged with global

leaders on the transformative potential of technology and innovation in driving sustainable development and ESG performance. On 12th February, I participated in the GISD Alliance Working Group Meeting, such collaborations are essential to mobilising capital and expertise toward inclusive and equitable economic development, ensuring that sustainability is integrated not only into corporate strategy but also into broader societal progress.

In the spirit of action and engagement, on 14th February, we joined Emirates Environmental Group in celebrating Valentine's Day in a way that truly reflects our love for the planet. We also partnered with them in Can Collection Day, demonstrating that community-driven initiatives can have tangible environmental impact. Through hands-on participation, citizens are empowered to contribute directly to sustainability, fostering a culture of care, responsibility and stewardship that extends beyond individual actions to wider societal impact. On 19th February, I attended the Governance & Nomination Committee meeting of the World Green Building Council, contributing to strategic discussions aimed at strengthening governance, standards and leadership in sustainable built environments globally.

Looking at the bigger picture, the evolving sustainability landscape presents both challenges and unprecedented opportunities. Businesses are being called upon to reduce their environmental footprint and also to drive systemic change — integrating sustainability into strategy, culture, and decision-making. Governments are creating more ambitious regulatory frameworks, communities are demanding accountability and investors are increasingly prioritising ESG performance. Against this backdrop, platforms such as the Global Sustainability & CSR Forum and the Arabia CSR & Sustainability Awards serve as vital catalysts — connecting leaders, sharing best practices, showcasing innovations and celebrating achievements that inspire wider adoption.

At the Arabia CSR Network, we remain committed to supporting this transformative journey. We provide a space for organisations to learn, collaborate and lead — while also championing initiatives that empower youth, strengthen community engagement and advance the UAE's and region's sustainability ambitions. Each Forum, panel, award, training and engagement contributes to a collective legacy of knowledge, action and impact that extends far beyond individual organisations to society, economy, and the natural environment. As 2026 unfolds, the pace of change is accelerating, and the opportunities to make meaningful impact are greater than ever.

I encourage all our members, partners and stakeholders to actively participate — whether through the upcoming Forum, Awards, or Trainings — to help shape a sustainable, resilient and equitable future for the UAE, the Middle East and the world. Together, we are not only responding to global sustainability challenges; we are defining what leadership, responsibility and impact look like in the 21st century.





ACSRN News

AIBC Eurasia 2026

Dr. Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of the Arabia CSR Network, delivered a keynote address at AIBC Eurasia 2026 on **10th February** at the Festival Arena, Dubai Festival City. Her session, titled "Powering Creative Economies Through Policy, Capital and Innovation Infrastructure," focused on the intersection of creativity, sustainability, and economic growth.

In her address, Dr. Habiba outlined the critical role of creative economies in shaping regenerative development. She emphasised that innovation and entrepreneurship must advance in ways that protect natural systems and generate measurable environmental benefits. Dr. Habiba highlighted three key drivers for sustainable transformation: enabling policies, aligned capital, and robust innovation infrastructure. She demonstrated how consistent policy frameworks, sustainable investment and well-supported innovation ecosystems can help scale green solutions from ideas to market-ready impact.

She concluded by noting that sustainability represents one of the greatest opportunities of our time, offering pathways to economic resilience, job creation and long-term competitiveness. "When creativity aligns with sustainability, we do not limit progress—we redefine it," she said.

GISD Alliance Working Group Meeting

On **12th February**, Dr Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder & CEO of the Arabia CSR Network, participated virtually in the first Outreach & Engagement Working Group meeting of the year in her capacity as a Board Member of the GISD Alliance.

The meeting marked the resumption of the Working Group's activities following the launch of the Alliance's new phase, bringing members together to align on priorities and strengthen collaborative engagement. Key agenda items included updates on the Alliance's renewed scope of work, a presentation on upcoming opportunities for outreach and partnership, and an interactive discussion inviting member perspectives to help shape future initiatives.

Her participation reflects continued involvement in international sustainability and responsible investment dialogue, contributing regional insights and practical experience to support collective efforts aimed at advancing sustainable development outcomes.

From Cans to Climate Action: 11,963 kg Collected Across the UAE

Arabia CSR Network, joined forces with the Emirates Environmental Group as the CSR Partner, to conduct the 30th cycle of Can Collection Day, a nationwide initiative that saw **11,963 kg** of aluminium cans collected across the UAE. The campaign demonstrates how a single act of recycling can be scaled into meaningful climate action through collaboration across sectors.

Held on **14th February**, the initiative brought together academic institutions, corporates, government entities, hospitality establishments and families from all seven Emirates.

By collecting and recycling aluminium cans, participants helped prevent approximately **180 metric tonnes** of CO₂ equivalent emissions, contributing directly to the UAE's sustainability and climate action objectives. Since the programme began, EEG has collected a total of **490,962 kg** of aluminium cans, highlighting the measurable impact of long-term community engagement.

As the CSR Partner, Arabia CSR Network supported the initiative by promoting participation, engaging corporate and civil society stakeholders and ensuring the programme aligns with best practices in corporate sustainability. The collaboration reflects the growing importance of cross-sector partnerships in advancing national environmental goals, in line with UN SDGs on responsible consumption, climate action and partnerships for the goals. Arabia CSR Network remains committed to supporting initiatives that create measurable environmental impact and foster collaboration between the public, private and civil society sectors.



WGBC Governance and Nominations Committee

On **19th February**, Dr Habiba Al Mar'ashi, Founder and CEO of the Arabia CSR Network, took part in the Governance and Nominations Committee meeting of the World Green Building Council, serving in her capacity as Director of the Board.

The meeting convened to advance governance priorities associated with Board leadership, institutional continuity and the evolving composition of the Council's governing structure. Members reviewed procedural developments, assessed progress on Board nominations following the completion of director self-assessments and candidate submissions and examined the proposed framework guiding the 2026 Board election process and timeline.

Participation in these strategic governance deliberations reflects ongoing engagement in international platforms that influence sustainability leadership and organisational accountability. Such involvement strengthens global collaboration on responsible development and supports long-term progress across the sustainable built environment — an area closely aligned with broader corporate responsibility and sustainability agendas championed by the Arabia CSR Network.





Member News

McDonald's UAE: Serving More Than Meals Through "The Good You Don't Order"

When people think of McDonald's, they often picture the familiar favourites—Big Mac, Big Tasty, McChicken Nuggets. Yet beyond the menu, McDonald's UAE has been quietly shaping a meaningful legacy for over 30 years, delivering impact that extends far beyond its restaurants. As a Founding Member of the Arabia CSR Network, McDonald's UAE continues to champion responsible business practices and community-driven initiatives and its latest platform, "The Good You Don't Order," brings this purpose to the forefront. The platform launch is anchored by a creative and modern reimagining of the cultural classic, "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." Through a vibrant music video filmed in Dubai, the brand reinterprets the familiar tune to highlight the positive impact happening behind the scenes—beyond the food and beyond the counter. The campaign celebrates how every order contributes to meaningful outcomes, from converting used cooking oil into biodiesel for the delivery fleet to empowering youth through the McDonald's Junior Sports Academy.

Walid Fakih, CEO of McDonald's UAE, explained the platform's intention: "'The Good You Don't Order' isn't about sharing the good we do—it's about celebrating our customers. Every order helps support local communities, drive sustainability efforts and empower our employees. This campaign is a way to say thank you and to highlight the meaningful impact they create with every meal." The campaign also places McDonald's people at its heart. Team members from across UAE restaurants volunteered to appear in the video and out-of-home activations, bringing authentic energy and personality to the story. Their participation reflects the brand's belief that impact begins behind the counter and is built through the passion and dedication of its people. By blending music, storytelling and engaging activations, "The Good You Don't Order" offers a fresh and compelling way to celebrate the unseen impact of McDonald's UAE—proving that the brand serves far more than meals, it serves a greater purpose.

[Read More](#)

Upcoming

1. CSR Fundamentals Training 3rd & 4th February

This comprehensive two-day training programme will provide participants with a structured and practical understanding of sustainability reporting and its growing importance in today's business and governance landscape. As transparency, accountability and ESG performance become central to organisational credibility, the ability to

measure and communicate impact effectively has become a critical capability. Participants will gain in-depth exposure to sustainability reporting frameworks, guiding principles and best practices. The training will cover key components including materiality assessment, data management, performance indicators, impact measurement and alignment with internationally recognised reporting standards.

Beyond technical knowledge, the programme will emphasise the strategic value of sustainability reporting as a tool for risk management, performance improvement, investor confidence and long-term resilience. Participants will leave with practical guidance that can be immediately applied to improve reporting processes and integrate sustainability more effectively into organisational strategy.

2. Stakeholder Engagement Workshop 11th March

Sustainability is ultimately shaped through relationships — with communities, partners, employees, investors, regulators and society at large. This interactive workshop will focus on strengthening the skills required to identify, understand and meaningfully engage stakeholders in ways that support responsible decision-making and long-term organisational success. The session will explore structured approaches to stakeholder mapping, expectation analysis, communication planning and dialogue management. Participants will learn how to move beyond transactional engagement toward collaborative partnerships that generate shared value and build trust.

Through practical tools and guided discussions, the workshop will demonstrate how effective stakeholder engagement strengthens governance, improves risk management and enhances the quality and legitimacy of sustainability initiatives. Participants will gain practical frameworks to design engagement processes that are purposeful, transparent, and aligned with organisational goals.

[Register Now](#)

3. MENA Dairy Congress 2026

The Arabia CSR Network is honoured to join the MENA Dairy Congress 2026 as the Sustainability Partner, supporting the region's leading platform for dairy industry development in the Middle East and North Africa. The congress will be held on **30th-31st March 2026** in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, gathering industry leaders, policymakers and technology providers to address key challenges, share innovations, and foster collaboration across the fast-growing MENA dairy sector.

The 2026 programme will focus on themes such as sustainable production, circular economy solutions, climate-smart technologies, food safety, traceability and ethical business practices. Arabia CSR Network's involvement ensures that sustainability considerations remain a central element of strategic dialogue, innovation, and decision-making at the congress. With participants expected from over 20 countries, alongside plenary sessions, B2B meetings, and site visits, the MENA Dairy Congress 2026 will provide a high-impact platform to strengthen partnerships, promote sustainable industry solutions and support responsible growth in the regional dairy ecosystem.





Feature Article

What is corporate social responsibility (CSR)?

Expert from Amanda McGrath, Staff Writer at IBM Think

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the idea that businesses should operate according to principles and policies that make a positive impact on society and the environment.

Through CSR, companies make decisions driven by financial gain and profitability, and the impact of their actions on their communities and the world at large. CSR goes beyond legal obligations: by voluntarily adopting ethical, sustainable and responsible business practices, companies seek to deliver benefits to consumers, shareholders, employees and society.

Why is corporate social responsibility important?

Often, a company's business model and practices are built around financial goals. However, CSR programmes encourage business leaders to consider corporate citizenship or the larger impact of the business on society when making decisions. Corporate social responsibility helps companies ensure that their operations are ethical, safe and delivering positive impact wherever possible. Through CSR initiatives, companies work to limit environmental impact, contribute to solving societal problems (such as poverty and inequality) and ensure their brand identity reflects their values.

What is the triple bottom line and how is it related to CSR?

The theory of the "triple bottom line" can help organisations as they pursue corporate social responsibility. As a financial framework, the triple bottom line refers to the idea that a company's business model should revolve around the three P's: people, planet and profit. By maximising all three, a company aims to make a positive impact on the world and remove barriers to growth.

What are the main types of corporate social responsibility?

Corporate social responsibility initiatives generally fall into four categories: environmental, ethical, philanthropic and economic. Each type of CSR contributes to a company's overall CSR strategy.

Environmental responsibility

More companies are assessing their overall environmental impact and engaging in CSR efforts that aim to protect natural resources and minimise any contribution to climate change. CSR encourages sustainability in business through eco-friendly practices, such as by reducing energy consumption, using renewable resources and minimising waste. Environmental responsibility hinges on eliminating negative impacts of business operations (primarily through limiting pollution-causing activities) as well as offsetting them through actions such as planting trees and engaging in programmes that support biodiversity.

Ethical responsibility

CSR initiatives often focus on social impact and human rights concerns, such as ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions and proper treatment of employees and suppliers. They also encourage accountability both internally and externally. Ethical CSR may include abiding by fair labor practices, ending workplace discrimination and ensuring supply chain transparency.

Philanthropic responsibility

CSR practices include donating money, resources or time to positive causes and organisations, such as local and national charities, educational programmes, disaster relief and more. Businesses who adopt philanthropic CSR engage with the communities where they operate, offering support through volunteer work, sponsoring local events, making contributions to local nonprofits or supporting skills training programmes.

Economic responsibility

Corporate social responsibility involves ensuring that money is not a company's sole motivator. To demonstrate this, companies enact policies and procedures to make sure their choices align with values, even if the alternatives may save money or boost profitability. Economic CSR also includes efforts to support the economic development and growth of the communities in which a business operates—for example, supporting job training and job creation efforts and forging local partnerships.

Why are companies adopting CSR?

Consumers are increasingly seeking products and services from socially responsible companies. Meanwhile, many investors are prioritizing companies whose values are clear and aligned with their own. To meet these demands, businesses are integrating CSR into their operations. In addition, global expansion and the increasingly interconnected nature of supply chains pushes companies to comply with a growing web of regulatory environments and to better confront the impact of their business on communities around the world.

With increased awareness of environmental issues, labor practices and ethical concerns, combined with better research and communication, CSR is now more central to business strategies. Some companies even have dedicated CSR departments.



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Best Practice

Aldar Properties Partnerships & Collaborations Category

Winner Arabia CSR Awards 2023

Brief

In today's ever-changing world, the importance of education cannot be overstated. Yet, many students face barriers to quality education, especially those from low-income households or with disabilities. Recognising this challenge, Aldar group launched the THRIVE Scholarship Programme, a remarkable initiative that paves the way for students to access a world-class education.

The THRIVE Scholarship Programme, a joint endeavour by Aldar Education and Aldar Properties, is a shining example of corporate social responsibility with a profound impact. Launched in the academic year 2022/23, the programme offers scholarships to students from low-income households and individuals with disabilities who exhibit unwavering determination. THRIVE is not just a scholarship; it's a holistic endeavour that aims to create a transformative platform for academic qualifications and employment opportunities within the UAE.

Here we delve into the programme's purpose, scope, partnership dynamics, its beneficiaries, governance structure, communication strategies, monitoring, evaluation mechanisms, lessons learned and its broader impact. THRIVE sets a new standard in providing quality education and comprehensive support to diverse groups of students in the UAE. It aligns with global goals, breaks down barriers and brings hope to those who may have felt excluded from traditional educational pathways.

Summary & Lessons Learnt

The THRIVE Scholarship Programme, a champion of inclusivity in UAE education, has not only transformed student lives but also embarked on a learning journey itself.

Sifting through a vast applicant pool initially posed a formidable hurdle. To ensure fairness and identify the most deserving candidates, THRIVE proactively scaled its capacity, adding a dedicated project manager. This strategic move streamlined the selection process, guaranteeing efficiency and precision in choosing the right students for the programme.

Accurate cost forecasting emerged as another key learning area, particularly during the initial cycle. Understanding the importance of expeditious support, THRIVE now meticulously assesses estimated costs, ensuring funds are readily available when needed. This proactive approach eliminates delays and guarantees that no deserving student faces financial hurdles.

Beyond academics, THRIVE's enrichment initiatives, including tailored extracurricular activities and engaging masterclasses, have revealed the transformative power of individualisation. Catering to unique stu-

dent needs, from artistic pursuits to specific learning styles, fosters holistic development and ignites passions. THRIVE empowers itself to offer even greater opportunities and more comprehensive support to its scholars. This commitment to refinement positions THRIVE to become an ever-brighter beacon of inclusivity, empowering diverse students to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the UAE's vibrant future.

The THRIVE Scholarship Programme isn't just a beacon; it's a guiding torch illuminating inclusive education in the UAE. Born from collaborative corporate responsibility and a deep understanding of community diversity, it's more than hope - it's empowerment. THRIVE doesn't offer a crutch; it builds wings. Understanding that each student is unique, it tailors support to their background, abilities and aspirations. Beyond financial aid, it provides personalised learning and mentorship, fostering an environment that celebrates individual strengths.

By championing inclusivity, THRIVE redefines educational norms. It challenges standardised testing and embraces diverse potential. This shift dismantles barriers, empowering students to flourish in their own way. This bold shift dismantles traditional barriers and redefines success, not by conforming to a mould, but by empowering each student to flourish in their own unique way. As THRIVE expands, it becomes a movement-a ripple effect of hope. It nurtures not just academic success but also empathy and resilience, shaping a future where talent knows no boundaries. THRIVE is a testament to the enduring power of collaboration, where compassion meets action, and hope blossoms into reality. It's a story not just of individual student journeys, but of a society choosing to invest in its own potential, one inclusive step at a time.

