

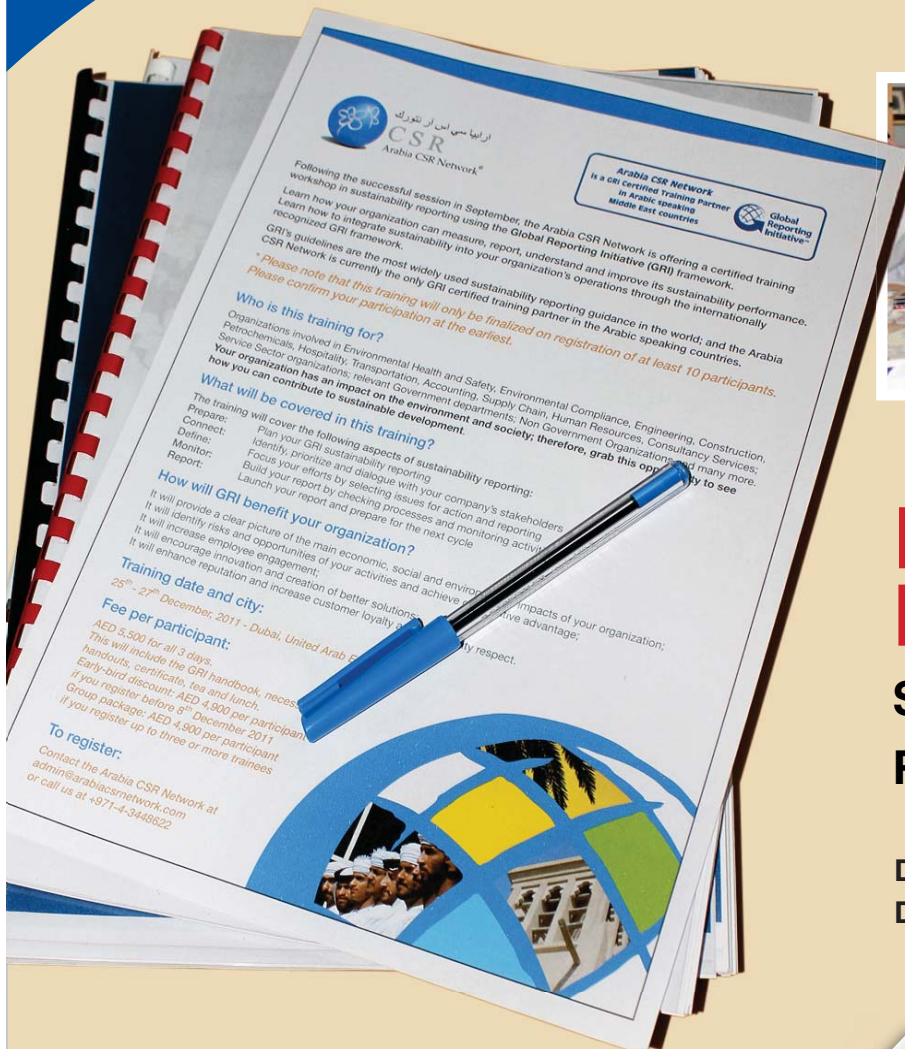
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CSR ARABIA

Arabia CSR Network

newsletter

December 2011
Issue 4



REGISTER NOW FOR THE GRI SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING TRAINING

December 25th to 27th, 2011
Dubai, UAE

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Note by the CEO / President Arabia CSR Network

Habiba Al Mar'ashi



Greetings from the Arabia CSR Network!

I welcome you all to the fourth issue of CSR Arabia – our independent and in-house publication that aims to inform and educate about Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

With readership increasing with every issue, we are trying our best to provide more useful information and updates to our readers. From this issue onwards, we have started a section in which CSR experts and thinkers can provide opinion pieces and other short articles. In this issue we feature Dr. Ashraf Gamal, a member of the Arabia CSR Awards jury panel, who speaks about the role of businesses in the Arab region amidst the socio-political turmoil. This article can be found on page 6.

The Arabia CSR Network always welcomes companies to come on board as active partners for a collective journey towards improved CSR. Over the years, we have had more than 60 responsible member companies and businesses. This year, to enhance the membership experience, we have added more options for organizations that wish to benefit from the Arabia CSR Network. I urge you to initiate the dialogue at your organization on how to add to your CSR work by becoming a member of the Arabia CSR Network. More details on page 4.

We have recently announced the dates of our next GRI sustainability reporting training session. I recommend you to register yourself for this course as the GRI framework is very useful for effective measurement and reporting of your non-financial performance. More details on page 3.

With every issue of CSR Arabia, we strive for continuous improvement in our solitary aim to educate private companies and other organizations about how to improve their sustainability performance. Please write to us at admin@arabiacsnetwork.com for comments and contributions. We look forward to hearing from you all!

Arabia CSR Awards update

الجائزة
العربية
للمسؤولية
الاجتماعية
للمؤسسات



ARABIA
CORPORATE
SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY
AWARDS

Reflections from the Head of the ACSRA 2011 Jury and Participants



“The winds of change that have swept through much of the Arab world for the better part of this year have left their mark on the Arabia CSR Awards. Opening the Awards’ fourth cycle, we received 42 entries from 10 Arab countries; yet businesses from some of the region’s largest economies were notably absent. Cause and effect are of course hard to establish, but it is clear that the Arab Spring has also impacted the region’s businesses in profound ways. It remains to be seen what these developments will mean for the broader cause of corporate sustainability in the Middle East.

While the number of participants was lower, the overall quality of entries was higher than in previous years, largely owed to the fact that the approach promoted companies to take a very close look at their strategies and operations and reflect on their performance – an exercise with a steep learning curve for many. This is what makes the Arabia CSR Awards so unique. It has evolved into a valid benchmark for sustainability excellence in the Arab world.”

Matthias Stausberg, Head of the ACSRA 2011 Jury and UN Global Compact Spokesperson



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"The event was organized well with timely inputs from the registration desk as and when required. Guests were treated with good hospitality."

Sapna Bhaskar, Tristar Transport



"It was a well organized and interesting event. The only negative was that the last speakers got very short time to speak because of delays in the program."

Asa Bertsson, Embassy of Sweden



"Fantastic assembly of sustainability champions in one room. Superb springboard for jumping forward."

Gary Foote, ABB UAE



"I think the event should be made carbon neutral to walk the talk."

Markus Oberlin, Farnek Avireal

We thank each one of the participants for the constructive comments and feedback. The Arabia CSR Network promises you that we will work harder to ensure an improved Arabia CSR Awards cycle for 2012.

Arabia CSR Network training update

GRI stakeholder engagement module

The Arabia CSR Network, being a GRI certified training partner in the Middle East, has also received approval from the GRI headquarters to deliver trainings focused on Stakeholder Engagement. This training module, which has been designed for a day-long session, will help organizations understand the relevant principles and concepts related to dialoguing with key stakeholders as a process and defining the content of a sustainability report using the GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines. Stakeholder engagement and inclusiveness is one of the key elements required for any sustainability strategy as it helps strengthen relationship and trust between your organization and your stakeholders.

GRI upcoming training session

Following the successful session in September, the Arabia CSR Network is once again offering a certified GRI sustainability reporting training to organizations and individuals in the Middle East. This training will be held from 25th to 27th December at the ACSRN office in Dubai, UAE.



According to a recent survey by KPMG, the GRI Guidelines are used by 80% of the G250 and 69% of N100 companies and is gaining widespread adoption as the de facto reporting standard in the world. GRI's guidelines are very useful in helping organizations improve their relationships with different stakeholders and attract investors by better measurement, management and reporting of their environmental, social and corporate governance performance.

The Arabia CSR Network is the first, and currently the only, organization that has been certified by GRI to offer training services to organizations and individuals based all over the Middle East and North Africa. To register for this training, please visit www.arabiacsrn.com/GRI, fill in the attached registration form and e-mail to admin@arabiacsrn.com. For more information on GRI certified training sessions, please call the Arabia CSR Network at +971-4-3448622.



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Events

Sustainability Network CEO CSR Seminar

The Arabia CSR Network attended the Sustainability Network CEO CSR Seminar organized by the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Top executive from two major banks – HSBC and Bank Alpen-Sarasin – lead the discussion at this seminar. HSBC is one of the corporate members of the Arabia CSR Network while Bank Sarasin-Alpen is one of the winners of the Arabia CSR Awards 2011.

Mr. Nabeel Abdul Rahim, Acting CEO, HSBC Middle East Securities was present at the event and stated that “ We invest in educational projects around the world for disadvantaged youngsters, believing that access to education offers the best opportunity for prosperity in the years ahead. And we support the mitigation of environmental challenges by working with local organizations, providing financial assistance and staff volunteering time in tackling climate change.” The other key speaker at the seminar, Ms. Sameena Ahmad, MD at the Bank Sarasin-Alpen (ME) Limited, stated that “CSR is a very important part of our organization’s philosophy and is reflected in our interaction with our clients, employees as well as stakeholders.”

Dr. Belaid Rettab, Senior Director, Economic Research and Sustainable Business Development Sector, Dubai Chamber, also spoke at the event. He emphasized on the importance of strong leadership which he said distinguishes world-class companies from their peers and has got to come from the top. The Sustainability Network brings together UAE’s top business leaders and aims to engage business and community, initiate programs to raise awareness, promote CSR best practices; and engage with the media and government for buy in and regulatory support.

GRI webinar with ING

The Arabia CSR Network recently attended a webinar hosted by GRI in which ING, a global financial institution of Dutch origin, presented its stakeholder engagement process. In their presentation, ING stated that the customer should be given a more central focus, particularly after the economic crisis. ING, which operates in 40 countries with over 40 million clients, also stated that they work hard to incorporate sustainability in almost all of their financial products. These products include a number of user-friendly investment opportunities for the transition to a low-carbon economy. ING, as a policy, also does not invest in nuclear energy; this is another example of integrating sustainability in their operations.

Membership proposal

The Arabia CSR Network invites all responsible businesses and government organizations to strengthen their commitment to CSR and sustainability by partnering with the Arabia CSR Network. The Arabia CSR Network is a pioneering multi-stakeholder platform that engages small and large businesses and government institutions to strengthen their commitment to sustainable development across the Arab world. Member companies of the Arabia CSR Network, in addition to being part of an exclusive group of organizations that are a driving force of the CSR and sustainability movement in the region, will also receive a number of benefits such as discounted access to ACSRN’s capacity building workshops and trainings, opportunity to share your CSR experience at the ACSRN seminars positive press coverage through ACSRN’s events and activities, and more. There are two very attractive membership categories that interested organizations can choose from. For more details please write to us at admin@arabiacsrn.com. Please mention “Membership” in the subject



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Arabia CSR Network members' update

Ajman Free Zone Authority

Ajman Free Zone Authority, in collaboration with the Charity Organization, organized one-day trip for orphans to Ajman City Centre in the presence of His Excellency Mahmoud Khalil Al Hashemi, Director General of Ajman Free Zone Authority. H.E. Al-Hashemi also contributed a sum of AED 10,000 to the Charity Organization as part of AFZA's efforts to improve the lives of vulnerable members of society. In addition, the Authority provided material support to Mannar Al-Eman Charity School, organized an employee visit to the Pediatric Department at Khalifa Hospital in Ajman to distribute gifts to patients, participated in the 36th deaf week, in cooperation with the Center for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, organized a trip for the children of Ajman Centre for Disabled Persons to the Creek Park in Dubai and conducted a field visit to the elderly home and the male and female divisions of Khalifa Hospital in Ajman. These activities reflect Ajman Free Zone Authority's dedication towards humanitarian development and commitment for an improved society.



سلطة منطقة عجمان الحرة
AJMAN FREE ZONE AUTHORITY

Consolidated Contractors Group

Consolidated Contractors Group (CCC), one of the largest Arab construction companies, has taken a strong stance to promote transparency, accountability and good business practices in the GCC region. CCC has partnered with the Pearl Initiative, the private-sector led organization developed in cooperation with the UN Office for Partnerships, for this campaign. As part of this initiative, CCC has committed to a zero-tolerance approach to bribery in all its business functions such as procurement, project management and construction.



Coca Cola Middle East

Coca Cola Middle East was the Partner for Women Empowerment at the prestigious Shamsa Bint Suhail Awards for Creative Women and the Annual Women in Leadership Forum held in Abu Dhabi in November. The combined event, which recognizes the key role of women in the prosperity of the region, was organized by leading French business information group naseba. One of the key speakers at the event included Ms. Fatima Al Jaber, Chairperson of the Abu Dhabi Business Women's Council (ADBWC). The forum emphasized the need for cultural recognition of the female potential in the UAE's corporate sector. Coca Cola also supported the Friends of Libya's Children exhibition football match held in November at the Al Ahli Club in Dubai. This match was played by former international football players such as Jihad Mountessir (Libya), Hernán Crespo (Argentina), Nicky Butt (England), Fabio Cannavaro (Italy) and more. The objective of the match was to raise funds for the wellbeing of children affected by the political turmoil in Libya.



Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA)

DEWA hosted its first "Innovation and Creativity Forum 2011" to forward innovative national talent and promote a culture of innovation and creativity in government departments. DEWA is considered one of the leading utilities worldwide and has been able to achieve this reputation through its commitment to innovation and implementation of best practices. DEWA also organized an academic class for its employees to qualify for the International Diploma in Environment. This course aimed to enable DEWA's employees to work on current environment systems and promote their competitive capabilities to better understand and apply the latest international techniques in the field of environmental conservation and pollution prevention, as well as the application of best international practices in the field of environment management.



HSBC

HSBC was invited as one of the key speakers at the Sustainability Network CEO CSR Seminar organized by the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Mr. Nabeel Abdul Rahim, Acting CEO, HSBC Middle East Securities was present at the event and stated that "for HSBC, sustainability is about running our business for the long term; it is about investing in customer relationships; it is about ensuring that our governance is robust and that our risk appetite is prudently managed."





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Jumeirah Group - Jumeirah releases turtles back into the Arabian Gulf, The Jumeirah Group, as part of its UAE 40th National Day celebrations, will release six rehabilitated sea turtles back into the ocean. One of the turtles will be fitted with a satellite tag which will monitor its movement for up to two years. This initiative has been implemented by the Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Project (DTRP), which is based at Burj Al Arab and Madinat Jumeirah and runs in conjunction with Dubai's Wildlife Protection Office. The DTRP has been in existence since 2004 and has so far released over 400 rescued sea turtles back into Dubai's waters



Emirates NBD - In honor of UAE's 40th National Day, the Emirates NBD Bank is partnering with Tashkeel to organize an art competition titled, 'MY UAE'. Established in 2008, Tashkeel is an independent resource for artists and designers living and working in the UAE and is committed to facilitating art and design practice, cross-cultural dialogue and creative exchange. The 'MY UAE' competition is open to UAE residents of all nationalities and will accept paintings, photograph, installations, sculptures and mixed media art pieces. For more information, please visit



Metito - Metito, a global leader water & wastewater management solutions, has been recently presented the 2011 Best Waste Water Treatment Project award for its Yas Island project which involved constructing, executing and putting into operation new sewage treatment works to serve the Formula One Abu Dhabi Grand Prix track. The project will utilize a water filtration process which produces high quality effluent that can be safely used in open irrigation without any health hazards. The water treatment plant built by Metito will also benefit the Warner Brothers Movie World, Ferrari World, hotels including Yas Marina, a water park, the Yas Mall as well as the parkland golf course, marinas, a polo club, apartments, villas, food and beverage outlets.

Feature Article

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Arab Spring

Dr. Ashraf Gamal El-Din,

Executive Director - Egyptian Center for Corporate Responsibility

The concept of corporate social responsibility refers to what companies are doing, other than what is imposed by law, in the areas of human rights, labour rights, anti-corruption and environmental preservation. The aim is to play a positive role in the community not only in economic but also in social and environmental areas and thus help in the equitable distribution of the fruits of development and social justice. There is confusion between the concept of social responsibility and philanthropy; philanthropy is not linked to the company's core business and is usually characterized as random and non-sustainable as it related to certain personalities such as the chairman of the company.

Social responsibility on the other hand is for the company to take into account environmental factors, human rights and labour rights issues, anti-corruption at the workplace and more. This is called "responsibility in the performance of the business." And thus it becomes a culture of decision-making at the company. Social responsibility has focused mainly on charity and compliance with laws in Egypt and Arab countries. It also leads to companies working individually without coordination, hence weakening the impact of those actions. This leads to the erosion of corporate social responsibility budgets, for e.g. shelters and charity projects closing their doors due to lack of donation from companies. As a result, the global financial crisis has increased pressure on the poor dramatically and contributing to the explosion of revolutions in many Arab countries.

Companies need to deepen the concept of social responsibility in their operations through the development of systems for internal communication with employees, customers and society as a whole. Companies should make an effort and invest money in developing technology using local labor resources for services needed by the community. A lot of companies feel that there is no financial return from the application of social responsibility; this perception is misleading. According to examples from many companies in developed countries, CSR creates a competitive advantage in the market through the reputation enjoyed by the customers and financial institutions and suppliers.

CSR also benefits companies by translating into "market segmentation", i.e. developing and delivering goods and services that target the marginalized groups of society that are not ordinarily catered to by most companies. These include people with low incomes, special needs, no educational background or illiterate, in remote areas etc. These people are referred to as the "Base of the Pyramid". Corporate governance and social responsibility also have a positive impact on the prices traded in the market. The Institute of Directors in 2010 in collaboration with Standard & Poor's and the Stock Exchange and the United Nations Development Programme develop the "corporate responsibility" index. This index - the first of its kind in the Arab world - reviewed the 100 largest companies in the Egyptian Stock Exchange in terms of their performance in the areas of governance, environment and corporate social responsibility. A variable is chosen to represent the top 30 companies. It is worth mentioning that the performance of stocks is directly correlated to the performance of the CSR index.



ACSRN news article published in UNi Magazine

The Arabia CSR Network was recently featured in UNI - an interactive monthly English publication that caters to universities and students in the UAE. This article showcased the achievements and services of the Network and sought to raise awareness of the importance of CSR in a growing economy. The UNI magazine is distributed within university campuses across the Emirates. It is a publication that directly reaches out to university students, a segment of society that will be the leaders of tomorrow. The article can also be read on www.uni.ae/2011/11/24/locally-the-arabia-csrnetwork/



KPMG international survey of corporate responsibility



KPMG, one of the largest professional services networks in the world, has recently published one of the most comprehensive surveys of CR reporting ever published. The data was analyzed from 3,400 companies worldwide, including the Global Fortune 250 (G250) and the largest 100 companies across 34 countries and 15 industry sectors. Some of the key findings of this survey were that nearly every Global Fortune 250 (G250) company now reports on its corporate responsibility activity and that the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Reporting Guidelines are used by 80% of the G250 and 69% of top 100 companies. The report also stated that almost half of the G250 companies report gaining financial value from their CR initiatives. The entire report can be found on <http://www.kpmg.com/global/en/issuesandinsights/articlespublications/corporate-responsibility/pages/2011-survey.aspx>

challenges and benefits by participating in this survey. The survey had a two-pronged objective: to learn about current reporting and information needs from different stakeholder perspectives, and to continuously improve sustainability reporting through refinement and addition to the current G3 Guidelines. Now that the survey has concluded, GRI will analyze the results of the survey and will communicate the outcomes and next steps in early 2012.

GRI sustainability reporting database

Companies publish sustainability reports every year with a wealth of data related to sustainability performance. However, reading these reports and extracting relevant information can be difficult as most of these reports are very substantial in size and in number. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), with its new Sustainability Disclosure Database, aims to solve this problem by providing easy and user-friendly access to data on the sustainability and environmental, social and governance (ESG) transparency of over three thousand companies worldwide. Any organization can upload their sustainability report and related information to the database. The users can then compare the level of transparency of companies, sorting and benchmarking by sector, size and location. The database can be accessed at: <http://database.globalreporting.org>

United Nations philanthropy meeting to address youth employment



The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will host an event titled “Breaking new ground-partnerships for more and better jobs for young people” at the UN headquarters in New York in February 2012. During this event, dialogue will take place to strengthen the partnership between governments, the private sector and the philanthropic community in advancing youth employment and decent work. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system.

GRI G4 guidelines public comment survey



The Global Reporting Initiative recently concluded its public comment survey for G4 – the fourth generation of GRI’s Sustainability Reporting Guidelines. The Arabia CSR Network also offered its opinions on reporting

UN highlights importance of cooperatives

Cooperatives account for 100 million jobs worldwide and serve 1 billion members, putting people before profit. “Cooperatives contribute to food security, rural development, and other social services,” said General Assembly President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, as the International Year of Cooperatives was launched on 31 October 2011. During 2012, cooperatives contribution to societies and development will be in the spotlight under the theme “Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World“. Sha Zukang, Rio+20 Secretary-General, also highlighted their importance for the environment: “Cooperatives have an important role to play in the transition to a green economy. They offer a business model with comparative advantage in creating socially inclusive and environmentally sound economic practices,” he said. For more information please visit <http://social.un.org/coopsyear> (Source: <http://www.un.org>)



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Best practices from the archive



An overview of Aldar Properties

Aldar Properties is Abu Dhabi's leading property development, management, and investment company. As a partner in the development plans of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, it considers its projects as significant endowments to the economy, environment, natural resources, and culture of future generations. This perspective has led Aldar to create

sustainable lifestyle communities. Since its inception, Aldar Properties has consistently demonstrated its commitment to sustainability, defining it as "a responsible approach to natural resource conservation, and the creation of places that provide owners and investors with long-term quality, growth, and security."

Aldar perceives sustainability as a multifaceted concept. Firstly, this means the preservation and protection of resources that Abu Dhabi had capitalized on to build the success story that it had become. It also points out the necessity of caring for its immediate ecological environment, citing the indigenous mangroves and aquatic species that graced its city. Aldar is committed to the conservation of the natural ecosystems that beautified, and also provided the basic necessities for living. For Aldar, sustainability is not only about green buildings and charity work. It has pushed the envelope further by putting sustainability in the context of long-lasting business success.



It is not difficult for the company to see the direct relationship between protecting natural resources and ensuring prosperity as a business. In fact, it has realized that the path was one and the same. For Aldar, true sustainability requires harmony and integrates well-being among society, business and natural resources. It further emphasizes that attaining sustainable lifestyles is not an option but a responsibility.

The company has chosen to take on a sustainability strategy with a very high degree of difficulty. Its plan thoroughly encompassed all major operations from planning, construction, to after sales service. To embed sustainability in each stage, by implementing many process changes, has been a gargantuan task. To change many people's mindsets was an even bigger challenge. But Aldar has proven itself, time and again, as a groundbreaker in many fronts. In making sustainable living a reality, Aldar has raised the bar for itself again, and no doubt, it has emerged successful.

This abstract has been taken from the ACSRN publication titled 'Arabia CSR Best Practices: 2008-2010'. For more details on Aldar Properties and other companies that have been recognized for their innovative and effective CSR strategies write to us at admin@arabiacsrnnetwork.com and book your copy now! Please mention "Arabia CSR Best Practices" in the subject.

The Arabia CSR Network welcomes new members to be a part of its CSR journey. To learn how you can be a member, and how your organization will benefit from it, call us at +971-4-3448622 or write to us at admin@arabiacsrnnetwork.com
For more information on the Arabia CSR Network visit www.arabiacsrnnetwork.com