

CSR in Action - 2014

Overview

CSR in Action is an initiative designed by Al Ahli Holding Group's CSR division, in partnership with IIR Middle East, which aims to develop and enhance sustainability activities among students and professionals from the UAE. Building on the highly successful 2011 program in Dubai and the subsequent additions in Lebanon, Dubai and Jordan, CSR in Action 2014 will return to the UAE engaging multiple Emirates.

Taking place from the 3rd of February to the 23rd of May, CSR in Action engages 32 participants, consisting of 24 University students and 8 CSR professionals. Each CSR professional will be a representative of CSR in Action's partner organizations who will commit to building impactful sustainability projects, in a team alongside three University students. Each team will design a project that fits with the sustainability agenda of their CSR professional's organization. The project must operate externally to the company so that it can scale through social enterprise principles and the company can exit.

Participants will attend five workshop sessions in Dubai that are designed to train participants how to develop such impactful sustainability projects, covering idea conception through to developing an implementation plan. Participants will then have until the 1st of May to begin implementing the CSR project.

CSR in Action will close at IIR's annual CSR summit, where the best three projects will present to an audience consisting of VIP guests, government representatives, and key stakeholders in the CSR sphere. For more information about the closing ceremony please see here: <http://www.iirme.com/csrsummit>

Projects Specification

1. The project team must consist of 1 CSR practitioner and 3 University students.
2. The company of the practitioner in the group must adopt the project: the project must be relevant to the sustainability agenda of the company and the company should support the project in committing resources (employee time, company competencies and seed funding if required).
3. Practitioners must be of senior management level with decision making capacity.
4. Teams are allocated on matching participants in their area of interest, alongside ensuring each team has a complementary set of skill/domain expertise.
5. The project should tackle the issue externally to the company to properly engage the student participants. (eg. Environment projects shouldn't aim to reduce water consumption in the company; rather the project should find a way water consumption can be reduced in the UAE). For example, Mars supporting coco farmers in the Ivory Coast (<http://marsfarmersfirst.com/about/> & <http://www.mars.com/global/brands/cocoa-sustainability/mars-and-cocoa-sustainability.aspx>)
6. The project must be designed to be self sustaining from the medium term (post year 1) and to be scalable (no obvious limits to its growth) – thus the project should follow social enterprise principles.
7. The project must have an exit strategy for the practitioner's company of less than 3 years.
8. Each team must identify the social challenge they wish to work on from a set list before the program starts. There will be 4 challenges and 2 of the 8 teams will tackle each issue. The four social challenges will be:
 1. Talent sustainability: ensuring the next generation are ready to lead our organizations.
 2. Waste management: ensuring frugality in the workplace and efficient use of resources.
 3. Women empowerment: providing opportunities for women and ensuring equality of opportunity in the workplace.
 4. Sustainable supply chains: ensuring products reach market without being produced or using resources in an unfair or unsustainable manner.

Agenda

3-Feb	10-Feb	17-Feb	24-Feb	3-Mar
9.00 - 12.00	9.00 - 13.00	9.00 - 13.00	9.00 - 13.00	9.00-11.30
The CSR project	Design Thinking	Ideation	Project Modeling and Agile Development	Scaling & Funding Opportunities
12.00 - 13.00				11.30-13.00
Team selection				Project Management
13.00 – 14.00				
Lunch				
14.00 - 16.00	14.00 - 15.00	14.00 - 15.00	14.00 - 15.00	14.00 - 15.00
Mapping the Value Chain	Case Study – Exploring a Social Challenge	Case Study – Developing the Idea	Case Study – The Business Model	Case Study – The Maturity Model
16.00 - 18.00	15.00 - 18.00	15.00 - 18.00	15.00 - 18.00	15.00 - 18.00
CSR in the UAE	Group Working	Group Working	Social Impact Measurement	Group Working

Workshop Details

The workshop period has time between each session to give the teams more time to implement the concepts into their project conception whilst following a structured flow. As the idea is more developed when new concepts are introduced, participants will be able to engage with the concepts better. The time in between also allows for particular ideas to fail and iterate whilst maintain pace with the program's general trajectory.

Each week, each team will receive one hour of mentoring from managers of CSR projects or social entrepreneurs. The mentors will be consistent throughout the program with relevant industry expertise in the social challenge each team will tackle. Receiving mentoring each week will allow for expert critique and give teams time to integrate these suggestions in their ideas.

Post-3rd March, mentors will meet the team bi-weekly. Mentor meetings can be done in person or over Skype and will be followed with regular communication via email.

Program Timeline:

The project must be delivered according to the following timeline:

02/02/13 - 03/03/13:	Project Conception
04/03/13 - 01/05/13:	Pilot Project Implementation
01/05/13 - 15/05/13:	Project Assessment
23/05/13:	IIR Summit and Presentations

Day 1

The CSR Project

- Details of the specification for the projects
- The benefits of launching such projects
- Case study examples of similar projects
- An overview to social enterprise principles
- How CSR links to business objectives
- Recognizing the links between the welfare of society and the success of the organization. (Porters Shared value)
- Where it fits within the organization and whom is responsible for it

Team Selection

- In their teams, participants identify what resources (capital, time, relationships) they have available to understand their constraints in meeting any proposed solution. Also participants identify mutual and complementary expertise they possess within the team.

Mapping the Value Chain

- It becomes important to map the value chain, environment and stakeholders surrounding a social challenge before attempting to solve it; for two reasons. Firstly, social challenges exist because of a breakdown somewhere in the value chain – creating a CSR project downstream the chain of where the breakdown exists will lead to no impact. Secondly, CSR projects contrast to business activity because they do not compete with organizations with the same objectives – rather they exist to complement, therefore it is important CSR projects are in alignment with the current activities of other stakeholders.
- What is the value chain to this challenge? Where are the gaps in this chain? Who are the stakeholders in this value chain?
- Research techniques

CSR in the UAE

- An overview to the CSR Challenges most prominent in the UAE from the program's selected list and have 1 facilitator for each who is an expert. The session could then be table discussions.
- Using the framework of the previous session – participants can ask key questions to the facilitator.

Day 1 Deliverable: Before the next session delegates must map the value chain and stakeholders of the social challenge they are working on.

Mentor Feedback: 7th Feb Morning

Day 2

Design Thinking

- Identifying a “micro” challenge to solve – that if solved will support the professional’s organization’s business objectives. So far delegates have worked on a macro level; exploring the challenge as a whole. To effectively start a project, its solution must be initially narrowly focused. Delegates will explore gaps in the value chain identified by breaking the problem down further and choosing the best sub-problem to try to solve – based on their passion, expertise and resource constraints. The project idea here is solely a good problem and is not a solution.
- Emphasizing Process of Stanford’s Design Thinking
 - o Methods to immerse and engage with the “customers/recipients” of this challenge.
 - o Tools to learn from these engagements.
- Defining Process of Stanford’s Design Thinking
 - o Detailing a description of the user and structuring their needs

Case Study – Exploring a Social Challenge

- A detailed case study providing an overview of a specific, narrowly focused problem. There isn’t talk about solutions here, but a case study of how they a project connected with customers/recipients to explore a social challenge and an example structured description of the problem they solve.

Day 2 Deliverable: Before the next session delegates must engage with the customers/recipients” of their challenge by meeting people in person. They must then bring a structured description of the problem they face to the next session – ready to start creating a solution.

Mentor Feedback: 14th Feb Morning

Day 3

Ideation

- The delegates must use various innovation models to develop a solution to the problem identified.
- Expertise/Resource to Solution Fit: can the team implement this idea?
- What is the project’s vision?

Case Study – Developing the Idea

- This case study will outline how the CSR project’s solution was developed to tackle a particular social challenge. Keeping focused to this aim rather than explain in detail how the solution works.

Day 3 Deliverable: Before the next session delegates must develop a solution to the problem identified and ensure that this solution is implementable given their expertise/resources.

Mentor Feedback: 21st Feb Morning

Day 4

Developing Strategy

- Business Modeling:
 - o An overview of Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas as a tool for structuring the project idea.
 - o Explanation of each segment of the canvas
 - o Identifying assumptions and developing hypotheses
- Agile Development (lean startup principles):
 - o Developing a Minimum Viable Project.
 - o Validated Learning.
 - o Testing Methods.

Case Study – The Business Model of an external CSR project which is self-sustaining

- Here the case study will showcase an organisation which has developed a project in similar specification to that the delegates are required to produce. The case study will outline the business model of how the project operates using the business model canvas as a framework.

Social Impact Measurement

- What are the KPI's to determine that social impact has been achieved?
- What feedback systems will be developed to measure results?
- How does this compare against your investment?

Day 4 Deliverable: Before the next session delegates must develop a business model for their project idea, complete with hypotheses and appropriate tests.

Mentor Feedback: 28th Feb Morning

Day 5

Scaling & Funding Opportunities

- What can the impact be at scale?
- Who are the additional stakeholders that may become involved?
- Do partners have sufficient resources to support the project on the same terms at scale?
- What activities/resources will be required at this scale? What will this cost?
- Does the model still produce an attractive profit margin at scale?
- What finance will they therefore need to get to scale?
- What sources of finance are available to scale?
- What is the funding plan?
- Does their margin support a suitable ROI to secure this finance?
- Developing processes: what processes need to be created so that the project, to a large extent, operates autonomously and can reach scale.

Project Management

- Who will do each activity?
- When will each activity be done?
- When will cash be needed to fund these activities and to purchase the resources you need?
- Overview of the following tools: Gantt Charts- Critical Path Analysis- Cash Flow Forecast

Case Study – The Maturity Model

- A detailed case study a company's CSR project's journey so far and its strategy for the future, including: its financial model, planned exit, and its funding strategy.