

Corporate Volunteering in the Arab Region

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- Available in hardcopy in Arabic
- Available online in both Arabic and English

A regional follow up to IAVE's global study of corporate volunteering:

Global Companies Volunteering Globally

by Dr. Kenn Allen

- More in-depth of coverage of the Arab World
- Focused on Arab (not global) companies
- Translated into Arabic

Based on:

- Extensive online research
- Direct meetings & interviews
- A very small number of surveys
- Corporate documents

Types of Corporate Volunteering featured in press releases and news articles

- Blood drives
- Renovation and relocation
- Clean-up and recycling campaigns
- Helping those with disabilities
- Hospitals/health
- Major sports events
- Seniors
- Helping farmers
- Education/Employability
- Ramadan and Hajj Support
- Causes

Most of these are:

- One time events
- Unskilled
- Possible for all employees and their families to participate in

Other experiences in corporate volunteering exist, but have little online coverage

Four Categories of Stakeholders

- 1) **Companies** whose employees engage in corporate volunteering
- 2) **Organizations** engaging corporate volunteers
- 3) **Infrastructural support** for corporate volunteering
- 4) **Government support** for corporate volunteering

1) **Companies** whose employees engage in corporate volunteering

Model Company: Abraaj Capital



A leading private equity manager investing in high growth markets. – based in Dubai, UAE.

- Volunteering is integrated into its corporate culture.
- Seen as part of its commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR)

A major component of its CSR commitment is its Social Investing Program based on its **5+5+5 practice**

*Abraaj contributes **5%** of its top-line fee income revenue;*

Employees are encouraged to volunteer

- ***5%** of their annual bonuses;*
- *and a minimum of **5 days** of their time a year, out of which 3 days are paid by Abraaj,*

At Abraaj, each employee has the personal duty to engage with the initiatives we support as a company.

Volunteer Menu 2011

First suggestion in the booklet is to call on employees to:

- 1) Take the initiative
- 2) Form teams of 2-3 colleagues with similar expertise
- 3) Work under the supervision of a senior executive
- 4) Develop a training module for NGO capacity building in such areas as finance, human resources, compliance, and communication.

The rest of the Volunteer Menu 2011:

Features 12 Abraaj Community Partner Organizations (ACPO) with a *How to Engage* section for each.

Organizations selected for

- Their proven track record for efficient engagement and high levels of accountability
- The congruence of their values with those of Abraaj.

The range of volunteer opportunities includes:

- **Skill-based volunteering**
- **Management volunteering**
- **Direct service volunteering**

2) Organizations Engaging Corporate Volunteers

INJAZ Arabia (the Arab version of Junior Achievement)



- Most companies that engage in corporate volunteering in the region do so partly or fully with INJAZ.

The keys to its success engaging corporate volunteers:

- A set of basic modules
- Minimal volunteer commitment
- Strong INJAZ support of volunteers
- Recognition to both the companies and employee volunteers.
- The objectives of INJAZ fit well with needs of business sector.

3) Infrastructural Support for Corporate Volunteering

Support of corporate volunteering in general, not just for one company or organization. It can include:

- Promotion of corporate volunteering
- Training of companies
- Training of organizations
- Development of corporate volunteer opportunities
- Linkage of companies with community partners
- Facilitation of networking among companies
- Awards and other recognition

One example in the Arab region:

ENGAGE Dubai



- Established in November 2008 by the Center for Responsible Business, a division of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Helps member companies implement broad CSR programs
- Employee volunteering viewed as an important component of CSR.

ENGAGE Program

ENGAGE Dubai

- Part of the ENGAGE Program of the **Business in the Community (BITC)**
- In 20 cities worldwide
- **Dubai, the only participant in the Arab region**

ENGAGE Dubai support to employee volunteering in Dubai includes:

- **Training and resources** to develop a **company's** volunteer program
- **Training and resources** to help **community partners** effectively engage corporate volunteers
- **Linkage** of companies with local community partners (brokerage)
- **Networking** among participating companies

ENGAGE Dubai to support employee volunteering in Dubai (continued):

- **Coordinating joint volunteer projects**
- **Tracking** volunteer hours
- **Recognition** of companies and volunteers
- **Tools for companies to document and evaluate**
- **Research** on corporate volunteering
- **Media coverage**

4) **Government Support for Corporate Volunteering**

No evidence was found of any Arab national government, ministry, or other governmental agency

- having official policies related to corporate volunteering,
- providing incentives, training, or other infrastructural support.

A few examples of official recognition of the importance of corporate volunteering

- The ministries of education of all of the 15 Arab countries have authorized some level of access to public schools by corporate volunteers delivering INJAZ programs.

Madrasati in Jordan

a partnership between the public, private, and non-profit sectors to repair and restore 500 public schools throughout Jordan

The website for Madrasati - appeal to private corporations, suggesting that they can:

- *Provide various forms of financial assistance*
- *Involve their employees by specifying time they can contribute to the initiative*



مدرستي
Madrasati

MY RESPONSIBILITY... MY COMMUNITY... MY FUTURE...

The Madrasati website suggests possible ways that corporate volunteers can help:

- *Share expertise on planning and management as part of the community committee*
- *Train teachers and students on computers or other required skills*
- *Participate in programs such as INJAZ*
- *Tutor students who are in need of extra assistance*
- *Support extra-curricular activities such as sports and field trips*
- (<http://www.madrasati.jo/site.html>)

Conclusions

- Corporate volunteering exists in the Arab region by Arab as well as multinational companies
- Important models exist to inspire and guide future corporate volunteering
- Corporate volunteering has some universal traits
- Some elements of corporate volunteering are culture-specific.
- Corporate volunteering in the region – is largely reactive rather than proactive
- Willingness to provide volunteers as well as financial and in-kind support.

Conclusions (continued)

- There is very little recognition by any of the stakeholders - of the **potential benefits** of corporate volunteering **if it is approached strategically and managed effectively.**
- There is also very little awareness in the region
 - That volunteering of any type **can be approached with professional expertise**
 - That resources exist
 - That infrastructural support could benefit all concerned.

But all that is changing.

Reasons for Optimism

- Corporate volunteering is expanding in the Arab region
- There are some good models from within the region
- There are increasing opportunities for training and improved resources in both Arabic and English
- Great interest in CSR can be used to foster increasing interest in corporate volunteering.

THANK YOU

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