Editor’s Desk

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year 2014!

We are happy to share with you all the exciting programmes that have taken place in the past one year with the CSR Centre. We have not only increased our reach of stakeholders but at the same time created new partnerships.

In 2013 we have been working towards creating further awareness on both the “UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights” as well as the “Child Rights and Business Principles” through multi-stakeholder dialogue, training and research. A number of research on sustainability of sugar and cotton production has been conducted. The Centre is engaging in creating further impact through CSR.

We continue to engage in various partnerships to enhance the CSR agenda in Bangladesh as well as through highlighting CSR best practices in regional and global platforms!

Shahamin S. Zaman
CEO, CSR Centre

United Nation Guiding Principles

Like most developing countries, Bangladesh too has its share of human rights issues and problems. While fundamental freedoms are enshrined there is many scope to implement strategically Human Rights Components.

With a vision of preventing and addressing the risk of adverse impacts on human rights linked to business activity the CSR Centre in collaboration with Social Accountability International (SAI) and Danish Institute of Human Rights (DIHR) introduced the United Nation Guiding Principles (UNGP) for first time in Bangladesh. This will help private sector in engaging in implementing Human Rights through a customized approach and at the same time reduce risk in business.

The UNGP was endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in June, 2011. Since this time, the Guiding Principles have served as a global framework for States and business enterprises in preventing and addressing adverse human rights violations linked to business activity. The UNGP are built on three pillars: Protect, Respect, and Remedy.

The CSR Centre, SAI, and DIHR jointly convened one day long TOT as part of the project ‘Pillars In Practice’ to build awareness on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights on May 12-13, 2013. The CSR Centre, Viyellatex, DBL Group, M.A.C.K Shirts, Greenland Garments participated in the day long trainings.

In collaboration with SAI and DIHR, the CSR Centre convened the “Multi-stakeholder Forum” dialogue to learn how the United Nations Guiding Principles can help protect human rights and contribute to the social sustainability of Bangladesh’s Readymade Garment sector on May 15, 2013 at Hotel Lakeshore, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Multi-stakeholder Forum Dialogue

The CSR Centre with SAI and DIHR organized and distributed certificates on “United Nations Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights” at hotel Rigs Inn, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Training of Trainers (TOT)

Pillars In Practice

Pillars In Practice—Seeks to Ensure Greater Business Respect For Human Rights

A team from CSR Centre and SAI visited Viyellatex, DBL and Epyllion Group factories in Gazipur, Bangladesh on May and October, 2013.

The visit focused on examples of CSR best practices.
Update from Children’s Rights and Business Principles

The Readymade Garment industry accounts for 78% of the country’s export earnings and contributes more than 10% to GDP. 3.6 million are employed, 80% of them are women. The industry has created a platform for 2.8 million women to engage in a productive role in society. The industry has empowered women and played a lead role in alleviating poverty through skill development and employment.

Within the next 5 years it is predicted the ICT Sector will contribute 1% of the country’s total GDP from the software and IT services sector. It is estimated that ICT export sector growth will be 1 billion US dollars and 1.5 lac professionals will be employed in software and IT industry. Highly ambitious young people will be able to contribute a significant role in developing this sector.

Emphasis on Child Labor when referring to Child Rights was stressed by the respondents from the Textile Sector. Respondents from the Textile Sector indicated their commitment to CRBP was in response to demands from the brands. Respondents from the ICT Sector similarly stated they prohibited child labour and freely shared their opinion on the subject with the interviewers. The ICT sector valued the practice of CRBP as promotional and protection for their brand image.

The findings in both sectors indicate there is commitment and demonstration to CRBP but in an adhoc manner. It is recommended that there are further studies to identify good practices of CRBP/CSR both within these two sectors identified for this report and also additional sectors.

In Partnership:

CSR Managers’ Training on Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBP)

Introducing CRBP to a new group of business managers especially those who are responsible for CSR in their companies UNICEF, CSR Centre and Save the Children organized the training on February 27, 2013 at UNICEF’s Office. Professor Syed Ferhat Anwar from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Dhaka University conducted the workshop on CRBP and its implementation in businesses.
Launch of SANSAR Local Chapter

The CSR Centre organized a national launch for the Bangladesh Local Chapter “Launch of South Asian Network on Sustainability and Responsibility (SANSAR) Bangladesh Local Chapter” on June 17, 2013 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. SANSAR is a South Asian Network working on CSR initiatives in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan. SANSAR’s programs support the poor and the marginalized communities including supply chains in various hard-to-reach sectors such as tea, coffee, sugarcane, cotton and garments.

The main objective of the launch was to introduce and initiate the Local Chapter of SANSAR in Bangladesh. As SANSAR was already officially launched in Bangalore, India on March 2012, this was basically a formal initiation by CSR Centre to involve membership of different affiliates into the SANSAR Bangladesh Chapter.

Training

CSR Beginners’ Training
To introduce Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its implementation strategies the CSR Centre organized a training titled as “CSR Beginners’ Training” on July 3, 2013 at Hotel Rigs Inn, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Linkage with Supply Chain in the Agro Sector
The CSR Centre organized a training on “Linkage with Supply Chain in the Agro Sector” on September 10, 2013, at Hotel Washington, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Seminar

The CSR Centre organized a seminar “Multi Stakeholders Platform to Share CSR Initiatives in Bangladesh” on October 8, 2013 at Hotel Rigs Inn, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The objective of the Seminar was to share good CSR initiatives and practices undertaken by prominent national and multinational companies operating in Bangladesh.

Research Study

As a follow up study on “Challenges in Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility: The Sugar Industry in Bangladesh” the CSR Centre team with Prakruthi, India visited different sugar mills in Natore and North Bengal region from June 8-14, 2013. Meetings were also arranged with different stakeholders including GOB and private sector i.e.,

Bangladesh Food and Sugar Industries Corporation (BFSIC) and Abdul Monem Limited on the issues of sustainable sugar production.

Want to know more?
www.sustainableportal.com
Assessment of Market Sensitiveness and Market Environment for Cotton Supply Chain in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh textile industry has been maturing and positioning in the world competitive market, it is the 2nd largest exporter of the garments products. While the expanding industry is attracting world renowned brands and retailers, it is also facing turmoil in terms of social improvements and adoption of cleaner production to improve efficiency and to sustain the supply chain. Among the risks, Bangladesh’s poor record on safety and labour rights, recurrently illustrated by deadly accidents in the garment units, could undermine the country’s image, prompting international companies to relocate production. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) reports that “In Bangladesh, cheap labour costs, relocation by Indian and Chinese companies, and investment in the textiles sector suggest that consumption growth of cotton will be strong,” but the amount of domestic cotton production of the total could cater only negligible proportion of the total requirement of the country's textile industry.

In this regard, CSR Centre in partnership with Solidaridad has undertaken a mapping study on the Cotton Supply Chain in Bangladesh.

This study is being conducted by the support of Cotton Development Board, an entity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

The study was undertaken in the view of understanding market sensitiveness and market environment in terms of demand patterns and quality and quantity of supply chain in the cotton market in Bangladesh, with a specific emphasis on sustainable cotton.

This study focuses to understand the bottlenecks in terms of procedures and policies in the cotton supply chain that affects the performance of the whole textile supply chain. It focuses on mapping potential stakeholders in developing effective collaboration among different actors towards achieving responsiveness and efficiency of the sector. The study hopes to look for opportunities to integrate sustainable cotton.

Field Visit

The cotton research was conducted in 8 geographical regions: Jessore, Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, Rajshahi, Bogra, Rangpur and Dinajpur from September 4 – 6, 2013 and from November 15 - 17, 2013. During the visit the team interviewed around 100 local farmers as well as several private ginners, spinning mill owners and the related offices of Cotton Development Board.
The first meeting of the UNGC Steering Committee (SC) for Bangladesh took place on January 21, 2013 at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute’s (BEI) Conference Room. At the meeting, it has been discussed that the SC will promote sustainable, social responsibility activities among various business sectors in Bangladesh and will also serve as advocates and champions of the Compact nationally by contributing to public discussion and policy. The committee members will also actively recruit new adherents to UNGC. Four working groups have been formed on Environment, Human Rights and Labor Issues, TOR + Vision & Mission and Fundraising to deliver the UNGC Principles to formulate the vision and mission of the Steering Committee and to look into the fundraising initiatives to strengthen the sustainability of the Global Compact’s in Bangladesh.

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<th>Tor + Vision &amp; Mission</th>
<th>Human Rights &amp; Labor Issues</th>
<th>Environment</th>
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<td>The UNGCLN Bangladesh working group for Terms of Reference (ToR) + Vision &amp; Mission organized its first meeting with the participating committee members on March 10, 2013. It enables the UNGCLNBD raise funds for its activities.</td>
<td>The meeting of the UNGC Steering Committee working group on Human Rights and Labor Issues was held on March 28, 2013. The committee discussed the present human right and labor conditions in Bangladesh and put forward their view points and ideas regarding the issues.</td>
<td>The first meeting of the UNGC Steering Committee working group on Environment was held on January 21, 2013. The committee discussed present Environmental Condition.</td>
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UNGC Steering Committee working group on Fundraising was held on March 14, 2013. The committee decided that it will Facilitate training and capacity building sessions take the following initiatives to take the Fundraising.

Mr. Shitangshu Kumar Sur Chowdhury, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank has taken over as Chair of UNGCLN Bangladesh Steering Committee. We welcome him on board.

For New Membership: www.unglobalcompact.org
CSR Centre, in association with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Bangladesh, created a CSR Platform with the active participation and representation from some of the leading corporate houses and other stakeholders. With this platform, CSR Centre and VSO aimed to enhance corporate engagement and develop sustainable partnerships among the private sector and develop linkages between private companies and marginal producers through industry specific business groups.

The partnership contributed and facilitated several CSR Platform Meetings during the period 2011-2013.
Seminar/Conferences

Roundtable on Responsible Business through Partnerships and CSR

The Nordic Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bangladesh (NCCI), Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Centre jointly organized a Roundtable Discussion titled “Responsible Business through Partnerships and CSR” to promote responsible business practices by the Nordic companies operating in Bangladesh. The program was held on March 3, 2013 at BEI’s Conference Room. The panelists were Ambassadors from Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Danida Business Partnership Conference 2013

The Danish Embassy in Dhaka invited CSR Centre to do a presentation at the “Sustainable Development Conference” on November 7, 2013 at Hotel Westin, Dhaka, Bangladesh. In the Conference CSR Centre shared best practices of CSR undertaken by prominent national and multinational companies operating in Bangladesh from different sectors such as telecommunication, pharmaceutical, bank, power & fuel, and food & agriculture. The activities of CSR Centre were also highlighted.

Regional Co-operation in Advancing Responsible Business Practices

A Conference by The United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was a part of the 3rd “Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Week” which took place from November 18-22, 2013 at UNESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand. The CSR Centre was invited as Panel Speaker to the session “Regional Co-operation in Advancing Responsible Business Practice”.

UN Annual Forum on Business & Human Rights

The CSR Centre in collaboration with the Danish Institute of Human Rights (DIHR) launched a country portal project “Human Rights and Business: Country Guide” of 40 countries funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). As a key local partner of the project the CSR Centre was invited to the “UN Annual Forum on Business & Human Rights: Public Launch of Country Portal & Launch of Pillars in Practice Project” from December 2 - 4, 2013 in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.

Korea-Bangladesh CSR Seminar 2013 “Further Strengthening the 40 Year-Long Partnerships through CSR”

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in partnership with the CSR Centre organized a Seminar titled ‘Korea-Bangladesh CSR Seminar 2013: Further Strengthening the 40 Year-Long Partnerships through CSR’ on December 14, 2013 at Hotel Lakeshore, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The objective of the Seminar was to showcase “CSR Best Practices” of Korean companies operating in Bangladesh.

Youth Convention 2013 to contribute to a National CSR Policy for Children

CSR Centre presented a paper on “Corporate Engagement towards Elimination of Child Labor through Producing Skilled Workforce” in the event “Youth Convention 2013 to contribute to a National CSR Policy for Children” on October 9, 2013 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The event was organized in the framework of the Project “Partnerships to Combat Child Labor Through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Bangladesh” which is a 3 year Project implemented by Save the Children and funded by the European Union (EU).

Want to Join?

- Internship
- Volunteer
The CSR Centre is an independent, non-profit Trust supported by the private sector and civil society trustees. It was established in September 5, 2007, with private sector start-up funding to raise CSR awareness. The Centre’s goal is to promote sustainable development through responsible business practices. The Centre provides CSR services on a commercial basis. The primary objective of the Centre is to become the prime source of information, resources, and advisory services on CSR in Bangladesh, and the operational principal is to contribute to achieving the human development targets set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Bangladesh through private sector led growth.

CSR Centre is the Focal Point for United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) in Bangladesh. The Centre comprises of the UNGC principles and is the principal promoter of UNGC in Bangladesh. The CSR Centre is also the founder member of SANSAR (South Asian Network in Sustainability and Responsibility), which is a regional network working collaboratively for long term development and poverty alleviation.

For more information you can check out CSR Centre website: www.csrcentre-bd.org