



Outcome Report

Circle: GBPC Convening

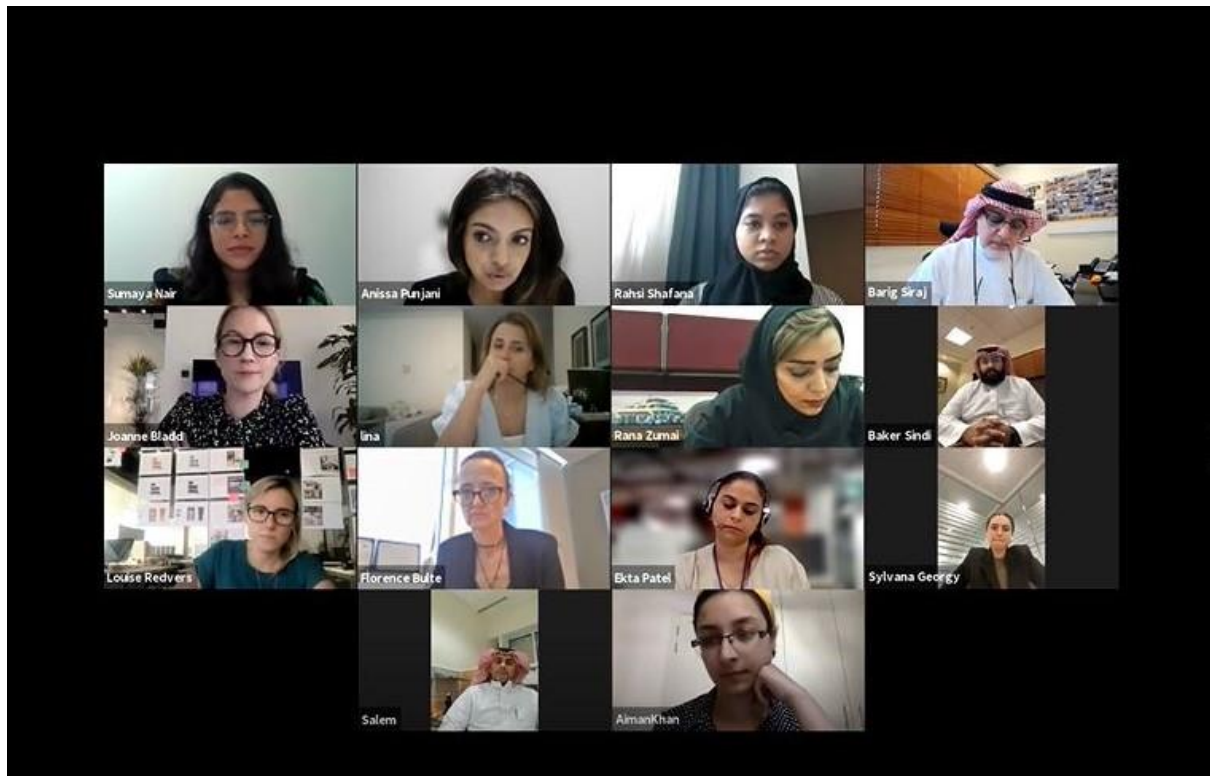
Understanding key trends in the philanthropic ecosystem

Event Date: 18th October 2021

Event Location: Zoom

Circle: GBPC Convening

To launch the Circle network's stream of corporate donors, the Pearl Initiative's Governance in Philanthropy programme hosted its kick-off project meeting with members of its Gulf Business Philanthropy Circle (GBPC). With the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and in collaboration with Philanthropy Age, the event convened key corporate donors within our network and provided them with the opportunity to share insights, priorities, and challenges in their giving in the upcoming months, as well as network amongst each other.



Screenshot of Zoom virtual meeting



Overview

To begin the virtual meeting, Anissa Punjani, Programme Manager, Pearl Initiative, introduced herself, [the Governance in Philanthropy programme](#) and its mission to support corporate and institutional donors striving to be more strategic and impactful in their giving. As part of the programme, the Pearl Initiative promotes improved governance standards in the Gulf Region's philanthropic ecosystem and aims to contribute to maximising the impact of giving through the development of resources and practical knowledge sharing.

To further advance the mission of the programme and with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and in partnership with Philanthropy Age, the programme launched a new project focused on refreshing its 'Circle' brand. Through this, the programme will engage with two streams of donors, corporate and individual next-gen donors, to assist them through the curation of convenings and bespoke resources.

Anissa welcomed the Members of the Gulf Business Philanthropy Circle to the meeting and encouraged them to share transparently about their organisation's approach to CSR, learning needs, interests, feedback, and experience as corporate donors. It was noted that this feedback would directly influence the development of a series of resources and knowledge-sharing events the Pearl Initiative is curating for the upcoming year.

Anissa highlighted that the Pearl Initiative had conducted [research](#) where significant data on the governance expectations of institutional donors pointed at the three main challenges in the sector being transparency, reporting and impact. The network was invited to take the programme survey and share their feedback on the current survey insights.

Additionally, the GBPC network was introduced to the implementing project partner, Philanthropy Age's team.



Part of survey results presented to the meeting



Notable Points & Key Insights

Feedback on future programming:

- Members would like to share projects and challenges, but also support companies outside of the GBPC
- PI team to identify common challenges and provide solutions (toolkits) to overcome them – ideally through illustrating with a company as to how the GBPC can add value
- Topic areas of interest:
 - What is the difference between a philanthropic strategy and a CSR strategy?
 - What is ESG?
 - How do you structure philanthropy, and what impact does it have when it's an extension of a corporate organisation's arm?
- Challenges include:
 - How should a corporate conduct due diligence on their CSR investments?
 - How does a corporate/CSR department address and assess solicitation?
 - What kind of screening criteria can a grant making organisation request of an NGO?
 - Should transparency in reporting be a primary indicator?
 - Does the NGO have an annual or impact report that is publicly published?
 - How many times a year does the NGO publicly report, and how does it spend down its budget?
 - Is the NGO accredited by any institution?
 - A major challenge is often that private organisations/corporates want to have positive social impact but don't necessarily have the support to go through the due diligence needed

Current areas of interest and programming:

- Nesma Holding is working with women and girls in Saudi to ensure economic empowerment for them. This is done through the provision of employment, including factories that are specifically fitted out with a women's-only area to encourage the comfort of women as they transition into the workplace
 - During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation provided ad-hoc support to numerous communities through a needs assessment and provision based on necessity, including by providing and fitting out air conditioning units
 - The organisation has also been investing heavily in fishermen in the region, including by providing them with courses and trainings to better conduct their operations
- Al Ahli Holding has been working with youth communities across the Gulf and wider Arab region, including Egypt
 - The group's yearly KPIs for the CSR department is contingent on changing the lives of 40 young people for the better



- Al Ahli provides young entrepreneurs with boot camp trainings, online software and coding courses, as well as lessons in entrepreneurship. Particularly for the latter, the trajectory of the youth is often tracked, and they are provided with resources, space, and funds to kick-start their small businesses as well
 - The group has also been making strides into investing in diversity, through particularly focusing on female entrepreneurs and supporting them through the pipeline of training, developing, designing, and selling handmade carpets in Egypt
- A GBPC Member representing Zahid Group denoted that the pandemic has highlighted the differences in access of marginal communities, and stressed the importance of not leaving behind rural communities that have not recovered as quickly from the consequences of the pandemic
 - Zahid Group is also making numerous strides in sustainability through attempting to reduce its annual carbon footprint, reducing its reliance on plastic, as well as attempting to recover the negative contributions it makes towards the environment by offsetting it with other initiatives to achieve net neutrality



Appendices

Appendix 1

Event Agenda

12:00 – 01:15pm

Virtual Call – Zoom platform

12:00 – 12:15pm Introductory Remarks

- Opening of meeting
- Introduction to the Pearl Initiative
- Introduction to Philanthropy Age
- Introduction to joint project with BMGF

12:15 – 12:30pm Survey Trends

- Short presentation on survey trends
- Invitation to take survey live to learn about member organisational approach:
<https://touchline.typeform.com/CircleCSR>

12:30 – 12:50pm Project Overview

- Insights on GBPC Members current projects, and short- and long-term priorities and challenges
- Q&A from Members

12:50 – 1:10pm Feedback

- Members to provide feedback on upcoming project
- Discussion on recommended areas for contributions going forward

1:10 – 1:15pm Meeting Close

- Next workshop potential dates (4th – 9th December)
- Closing remarks

Key Information

Number of Attendees: 16 attendees

Profile of Attendees: Corporate donors, Heads of CSR teams, Executives from Family Businesses



Appendix 2

Attendee List

Salutation	First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country	Job level
Ms.	Aiman	Khan	Emirates NBD	United Arab Emirates	Management
Mr.	Barig	Siraj	Zahid Group	Saudi Arabia	Senior Executive
Ms.	Florence	Bulte	Chalhoub Group	United Arab Emirates	Senior Executive
Ms.	Sylvana	Georgy	Air Arabia	United Arab Emirates	Management
Ms.	Lina	Hourani	Al Ahli Holding	United Arab Emirates	Management
Ms.	Ekta	Patel	Fedex	United Arab Emirates	Management
Mr.	Rehan	Fernano	KPMG	Bahrain	Management
Ms.	Rachel	Panaino	UNGC	United Arab Emirates	Senior Executive
Ms.	Rana	Zumai	Nesma Holding	Saudi Arabia	Management
Mr.	Salem	Al-Baqawi	SABIC	Saudi Arabia	Management
Mr.	Baker	Sindi	SABIC	Saudi Arabia	Management
Ms.	Rahsi	Shafana	talabat	United Arab Emirates	Associate
Ms.	Anissa	Punjani	PI Team		
Ms.	Sumaya	Nair	PI Team		
Ms.	Joanne	Bladd	PA Team		
Ms.	Louise	Redvers	PA Team		