CSR COLLOQUIUM
FOR INDIAN COMMUNICATORS
1st EDITION
2017
Premier CSR Networking
For Indian Communicators

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About Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) India:

Established in 1998, CAF India, a not-for-profit organization, offers strategic giving solutions to NGOs, corporates and individuals, for a more equitable and sustainable society. Over the past 19 years, CAF India has actively engaged with stakeholders across a broad spectrum of areas employing knowledge with over 100 corporates, 50,000 individual donors, efficaciously supporting more than 500 validated non-profits across 23 states in India. With its dedicated team of specialists, the organization envisions to build a society motivated to give ever more effectively and help transform lives and communities. CAF India, a member of the CAF Global Alliance that has nine offices internationally and distributes funds to over 100 countries across the world.
About CCIC

In the current corporate scenario, many communication professionals play a vital role in managing CSR. This means they not only have to adapt themselves to complying with the law but also go beyond their comfort zone to assess the efficacy of CSR projects. Therefore, CSR Colloquium for Indian Communicators (CCIC) has been curated as a platform to address modern challenges of CSR as practised by corporate communicators.

The colloquium aims at establishing a network of specialists to address challenges inherent in CSR through stakeholder dialogue and building a discourse on what more can be done to simplify understanding of the field. The platform would allow corporate communication professionals to strategize a comprehensive framework to manage CSR. In a nutshell, CCIC envisions:

- **Strengthen on-going CSR initiatives**: Participate in focus group discussion and develop succinct ways to refashion ongoing CSR initiatives in thematic area of interest of the organization
- **Nurture social alliances**: Share a common platform for knowledge exchange within communication professionals to establish the need to build strong social alliances to concretize ongoing CSR initiatives
- **Establish global leadership**: Attain a unique position in respective stream of business, as well as a progressive entity in a global scenario by demonstrating potential to bring social change benefiting the society at large
- **Enhance impact communication**: Recommend communications strategies to advance CSR agenda in the country to resonate credibly with the consumer and stakeholders
As part of the inaugural edition of CCIC, CAF India hosted a meeting of corporate communicators and CSR specialists at its office in New Delhi on September 1st, 2017.

The edition featured a focus group on the following topics:

**CSR Programme Management**
This session aimed to focus on the challenges of ideation, operationalization and implementation of CSR initiatives on ground with an objective of differentiating output, outcome and impact of projects.

**Story telling in CSR**
This session aimed to understand how story telling can be used as an influential communication tool to guide and enhance perception, understanding and assimilation of CSR initiatives by not only the target group but all stakeholders alike.

Through both sessions, all participants touched upon some significant insights for CSR programme management, while delineating learnings derived through a few projects being undertaken by their respective companies. The session ended with deliberation on way forward for the Colloquium.
SETTING THE CONTEXT

The meeting was initiated by setting the context for CCIC to highlight its imperative need in the current scenario.

INTRODUCTION TO CCIC

Shravani Dang
Group VP, Corporate Communication
Avantha Group & CAF India Board Member

Sangeeta S. Thakral
Head Marketing & Communications, CAF India

It's been more than three years since the CSR law came into effect. Programmes managed under CSR have gone through a drastic evolution indicative of a radical shift in the CSR landscape. Companies eligible under section 135 of the Companies Act 2013 have incorporated the law as an integral aspect of business modelling and initiated diverse CSR projects addressing issues for country’s inclusive growth. Companies have streamlined their financial flows and introduced a transparent and accountable framework to assess community development.

The advent of CSR has given rise to a new breed of leaders in the corporate landscape, especially from corporate communicators, managing CSR projects and documenting the same. They have broadened the horizon of companies beyond cheque-book charity concept. The contemporary CSR framework entails: programme management, monitoring and evaluation report, behavioural change communication, social impact assessment, story-telling etc.

CAF India has a long standing association of working with communication professionals across verticals. We recognize the dynamic role that corporate communication professionals can play in the implementation of CSR initiatives of their respective organizations. Our experience in the development sector is close to two decades which has helped us create strong alliances with 2100+ NGO’s across 23 states. This strength has been leveraged by many corporate partners in order to pursue their CSR policy development, programme implementation, payroll giving, cause specific campaign etc. Through the colloquium, we aim to generate an outcome report that will be shared within our peer network of esteemed communicators to further support and strengthen their CSR agenda.
CSR Programme Management

FIRST HAND INSIGHTS INTO CSR PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT FROM A CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL

SESSION EXPONDERS

Indu Anand, Senior Corporate Communications & Community Investment Practitioner, BAE Systems
Amandeep Singh, Chief General Manager Corporate Communications, Indraprastha Gas Limited

The corporate world today is riddled with overlapping functions across verticals. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a highly critical function for managing stakeholder relations and an increasingly important vertical for driving corporate strategy. From being recognized as a marginal entity in the corporate world, CSR has travelled a long road to be rechristened as a new mantra for scope of businesses in future.

Key Insights

• Benchmarking outcomes and outputs in a clearly defined manner and reporting them not just qualitatively but quantitatively as well early on in project intervention is crucial
• CSR programme management should be beneficiary focused to ensure a trickle down impact of benefits to actual target on ground. Intermediaries and consequential scattering of funds needs to be minimized for effective grant management
• Skill development and training of programme implementing grass root level NGOs and development sector partners, specifically for reporting mandates, compliance and communications is paramount
• Cross pollination between NGOs and corporates can largely benefit this area to cultivate core expertise of stakeholder engagement
CSR Story Telling

HOW CAN STORY TELLING HELP COMMUNICATE SUSTAINABILITY MORE EFFICIENTLY

SESSION EXPOUNDER

Kumar Deep, Head External Communication, Vodafone India

CSR has entered the communication arena as stakeholder demands have led organisations to communicate their social commitments in a more strategic manner. This in turn has put a spin on the role of communicators and CSR specialists alike.

Key Insights

- CSR projects, along with being integrated in the business case, will also profit from being transformational in their elements and not just promotional.
- The area and scope of intervention for CSR projects should be problematized at the outset with a certain sense of social responsiveness.
- A multi-stakeholder approach has the potential to benefit integrated programme management in CSR.
- Responsiveness of an organization towards issues needs to complement stakeholder management for improving communication.
Challenges identified for CSR Programme Management

• Communication in the space of CSR needs to address the gaping rural-urban challenge to standardize reporting, compliance and disclosure.

• Employee volunteering as an area of intervention faces delivery challenges by implementation partners who largely struggle to streamline it in accordance with corporate expectations.

Actionable Insights

• CSR programme management is a key area for academia of the country to focus on – curated syllabi with balance of ethics and strategic management can open new dimensions and prepare workforce with understanding of this discipline and inculcate socially conscious mindsets in students

• Inter organization communication and multi stakeholder involvement is a must going forward to share best practices and address challenges of programme management for holistic development. This has the potential to enhance sector integration, increase scale of project intervention with a defined period of commitment by crucial industry players for outcomes

• Communication about CSR in the country is more about humanizing facts through storytelling and can benefit more from quantitative facts and figures

• Employee volunteering can benefit from skill mapping while designing the project to streamline engagement tools, time and methods for volunteers, specifically millennial base
Way Ahead

- **Create Knowledge-sharing platform**
  Develop an innovative approach to identify best practices for multi-stakeholder engagement to improvise existing CSR policies through collective advocacy of potential causes for intervention.

- **Boost Peer Networking**
  Encourage deliberation amongst corporate professionals regarding CSR programmes to identify a future trajectory of growth and help corporates establish a progressive entity in the global CSR discourse in their respective organizations.

- **Build social alliances**
  Understand and strengthen the essence of building and nurturing social alliances in the area of operation by bringing specialists from diverse industries on the same platform.

- **Promote Technology led communication**
  Enhance the scope of social media and internal communication to promote CSR programmes by creating common modes and tools for sharing content.

- **Facilitate Reporting & documentation**
  Enable professionals to share their experiences in assessing social impact of respective CSR programmes and associated documentation of the same through a series of CCIC white papers and reports.

- **Strengthen Alignment with SDGs**
  Enable professionals to identify alignment of their respective business models with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in order to devise a CSR strategy focussing on sustainability.

Charities Aid Foundation India believes that communications will underpin CSR policy and would be crucial in documenting stories of change. CCIC would be decisive in charting out a roadmap for making businesses responsible and creating corporate identities that are globally recognized in the CSR domain.

CAF India, with its experience and expertise in the area, looks forward to organizing CCIC as a quarterly meet for professionals to share knowledge and present best practices.
Glimpse of the CCIC 1st Edition at CAF India on 1st September, 2017

PARTICIPANTS

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