

DCCI seminar focuses on social investment in healthcare

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Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) organized a joint seminar and networking event, 'Investing in Community Healthcare' with pharmaceutical giant Johnson and Johnson on Monday, October 27 at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel.

As part of its successful workshop series to create Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) awareness and building capacity for businesses in Dubai and the UAE, this Dubai-Chamber organised seminar came at a time when healthcare, which is one of the most dynamic sectors in the UAE's economy, is becoming a vital sector in the region.

With the rapid growth in population numbers it is predicted that the healthcare sector will grow rapidly in the next five years in the UAE.

According to a report issued by Dubai Chamber, the health care sector represents 6% of the total non-oil GDP of the emirate of Dubai.

The concept of sustainability in this sector is becoming an important subject as CSR moves from the periphery into the mainstream business agenda of businesses encouraging broader corporate responsibility toward communities and humanitarian needs.

Gillian Foster, Manager, Dubai Chamber's Center for Responsible Business gave details of the initiative of the Centre and Dubai Chamber in raising awareness of CSR among consumers and businesses and the implementation of best practices in their companies.

Mr Frank Welvaert, Director, Johnson & Johnson, appraised the gathering of directors and managers from industries about the trends and progress of CSR in the various subcontinents.

He also spoke about some of the key CSR initiatives across the globe.

The Johnson & Johnson team made of Frank Welveart, Director of CSR in the Middle East, Europe and North Africa, Johannes Pattermann, Managing Director of J&J Middle East and Wim Boogaerts, Chairman of the J&J Corporate Citizenship Trust in the Middle East, gave a detailed presentation on the J & J CSR strategy and how it is embedded in the J & J Credo.

They spoke about the focus of CSR initiatives in their company in improving and protecting the lives of women and children.

They spoke in detail about some of their key CSR initiatives worldwide and also specific initiatives towards juvenile diabetes and juvenile obesity being undertaken in the Middle East office.

Vineetha Mathew, Senior CSR Trainer, Dubai Chamber, gave a background on the healthcare sector in UAE and also updated the audience on the various events CRB has been organising including seminars and trainings, the launch of CSR leadership series, the upcoming launch of Strategic Partnership program and the ENGAGE program, research reports and the CSR newsletter issued by CRB.

Dr. Ayesha Al Mutawa, Vice-President, Dubai Healthcare City, spoke in length about the CSR best practices applied at Dubai Healthcare City in the form of seminars, workshops and educational programmes involving personnel, services and the establishment as a whole.

Dr Mutawa highlighted the importance of the concept and its application to upgrade the services and also spoke about environmental sustainability and awareness programs on health matters, saying that it was the best way to address the community on issues of social responsibility.

Eng Sobhi Batterjee, Founder, President and CEO of the Saudi German Hospitals Group made a very mind opening presentation about new business models that are being developed like the Corporate Social Business model and how these can be used to propagate large scale social change.

He also spoke about some of the key CSR initiatives from the SGH Group which includes hospital supports, blood banks and providing health care facilities to the poor at low costs and the future plans of the SGH Group.

During the discussion all the speakers emphasized on the capacity-building process in the area of health care which he said can be achieved through advocacy and education.

They also brought in the importance of adoption of new approaches to managing and learning in the healthcare sector and gave examples of how these practices were implemented in other parts of the world.

The seminar provided participants from Dubai Islamic Insurance and Reinsurance, Al Itqan Factory, Ithmar Capital, Pfizer, Dubai Healthcare City, Saudi German Hospitals Groups and Johnson & Johnson, the opportunity to network with CEO's of leading UAE companies as they discussed key societal challenges related to healthcare and recommendations to improve public private partnerships to tackle community healthcare issues.

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