



Newsletter

Men on the Side of the Road (WO348)

September 2014

Trends in Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility, or CSR, is a term that is often misunderstood, or understood in a very simplistic way. There are many definitions; this is only one that I feel encapsulates the philosophy behind CSR:

CSR is about how companies manage their business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society.

As international funding to Namibia gradually dries up, largely due to our status as an upper middle income country, more local companies are being approached by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) for funding for their activities.

With this increased pressure on scarce resources, Namibian companies are becoming increasingly sophisticated in the use of the CSR dollars by actively considering how their CSR can be integrated into their core business to produce a positive long term and lasting result. Although feeding schemes, and donating blankets in the winter months are worthy activities, they are 'charitable giving'. CSR has the potential to be much more than that, in that it should create sustainable and long lasting benefits to both the community and the company.

For example, an insurance company may prefer to invest the CSR dollars in Maths education, so that in the future, their potential employees are better able to fulfil the job requirements for that sector.

In NGO terms, sustainable should mean the lasting impact the activities have on the community in which the NGO is working, or put another way "the NGO working itself out of a job", by creating a lasting impact until its services are no longer required. It does not (or should not) mean that the NGO raises enough funds through other activities to fund their programmes. NGO's and companies can team up to become partners in ensuring the companies CSR objectives are met, in a situation of benefit to everyone.

More companies are taking a longer term view of their CSR, and developing a policy outlining the spheres of activity that they will consider for funding. This is a helpful step for everyone, as NGO's know in advance exactly what the company will fund, when the applications are considered, and the length of time the funding will be made available for. Everyone wins as clear criteria are in place for assessing all applications.

More inside!



What is a fair wage? How do you negotiate a better wage?

Continuing on from our previous members discussion, where the comment was made about low wages, the members had a discussion about what they felt is a fair wage, and how to negotiate for a better wage. These are the perceptions of MSR members, and do not necessarily reflect the views of MSR.

Members perceive that pay under N\$100.00 per day is too little. Their view is that it also depends on the type of the work they do. E.g. if light or heavy work and whether they do it for a day, a week, or a month.

How do you go about negotiating for a better wage?

The fear was that farm employers normally reduce wages if they hear the minimum wage and if they were paying an employee more.

Members were asked what they will do if that happen (wage reduced)?

Members responded by saying that they will leave the job if that happened. They continue saying that if they ask for salary increments; employers become rude and could even dismiss them from work.

The only solution is good understanding between the employers and the employees.

In the case of construction tenders: If any trouble erupts between the workers and the company owner e.g. if the company refuses to pay the salaries, a sub-contractor always get in trouble with the workers demanding their wage but the company (awarded tender) would not pay the sub-contractor or pays less than the agreed amount.

The perception among MSR members is that Ministry of Labour employees often side with the employers to dismiss cases or to keep their names clean. A person has to be a member of a labour union in order to be assisted by a workers union but often employers don't want employees to have workers' union membership. So employees suffer in silence.

The employer has a tendency of doubling the work agreed if he/she sees that a person finish earlier than the agreed time and then refuse to pay the worker extra, even though they carried out additional tasks

Sometimes workers can be stubborn too. They become rude to their employers and that can end up getting them dismissed.

Conclusion: what is the way forward?

- Members want MSR to negotiate the wage with employers. Hilya informed members that MSR does not accept placements if the wage is very low.
- MSR members find it difficult to negotiate on wages at the sites because people at the sites often don't want to cooperate.
- Members want MSR to set up a list of minimum wage in the office on different job categories. Hilya suggested that members should decide minimum wage at their respective sites and to work as a team to make it effective. She suggested that members could elect representatives amongst themselves to supervise at sites.
- Members emphasis on the point that they have different needs, morals and backgrounds so each person act their own way.
- Members encourage MSR office to continue accepting placement offers of at least N\$ 100.00 per day and MSR members should negotiate on their wage rate with employers at sites. Hilya gave advice that if any member goes for job placements arranged through MSR office, he should double check on the wage rate offered by employer before he starts working.

cont.

Statistics

MSR continues to gather statistics in an effort to monitor and improve our performance.

Up to the end of August in 2014, we registered 63 new members, and connected 109 people with job opportunities.

Job seekers corner

The following people have now completed Life Skills and Money Management and are actively seeking work: Kahwandi Jonas , 43 yrs, has experience as a storeman, picker and packer.

Shatika Fillip, 30 yrs. Has experience in painting, cell-phone repairs and plumbing.

Efraim Siyave, 26 yrs, has experience in merchandise and stock control.

Please contact the office on 061 305892 or email mensideofroad@gmail.com if you have a vacancy, or would like further details about the person.

Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, and forgotten by everybody.

I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat.

Mother Teresa

Paper block project update....

MSR was fortunate to have another group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute working on progressing the paper block project in 2014. This year's team looked specifically at the perception of the product in the intended market, and came up with a completely new design of product that burns better, and is not smoky, two of the complaints about the original product.

They undertook extensive testing, and have left us with a viable product and various potential business models for the future.

Shoes

The Bankers Association of Namibia held a charity shoe collection, which collected thousands of pairs of shoes, of all shapes and sizes: mens, womens and childrens. MSR was the lucky recipient of donations from Bank Windhoek, FNB and standard Bank. The picture shows MSR staff and members with some of the shoes.



Our corporate members, donors and partners

MSR can only undertake their work with support from corporate Namibia, other organizations and philanthropic individuals. We are grateful for the support we receive:

Capricorn Investment Holdings Ltd	Paratus Telecom	IJG Securities (Pty) Ltd
Bank Windhoek	Avril Payment Solutions	Business Financial Solutions
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SANLAM Namibia		

Thank you for your support:

**Association not for Gain (Reg 21/2007/025)
Welfare Organisation (WO348)**

Bank account details:

MSR (Namibia)

Bank Windhoek: Main Branch

Account: 8001384357

Branch Code: 481 972

If you want your donation to be used for training, please use this account:

MSR training account

Bank Windhoek: Main Branch

Account: 8002323840

*Branch Code: 481
972*



Always ask to see the MSR membership card



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